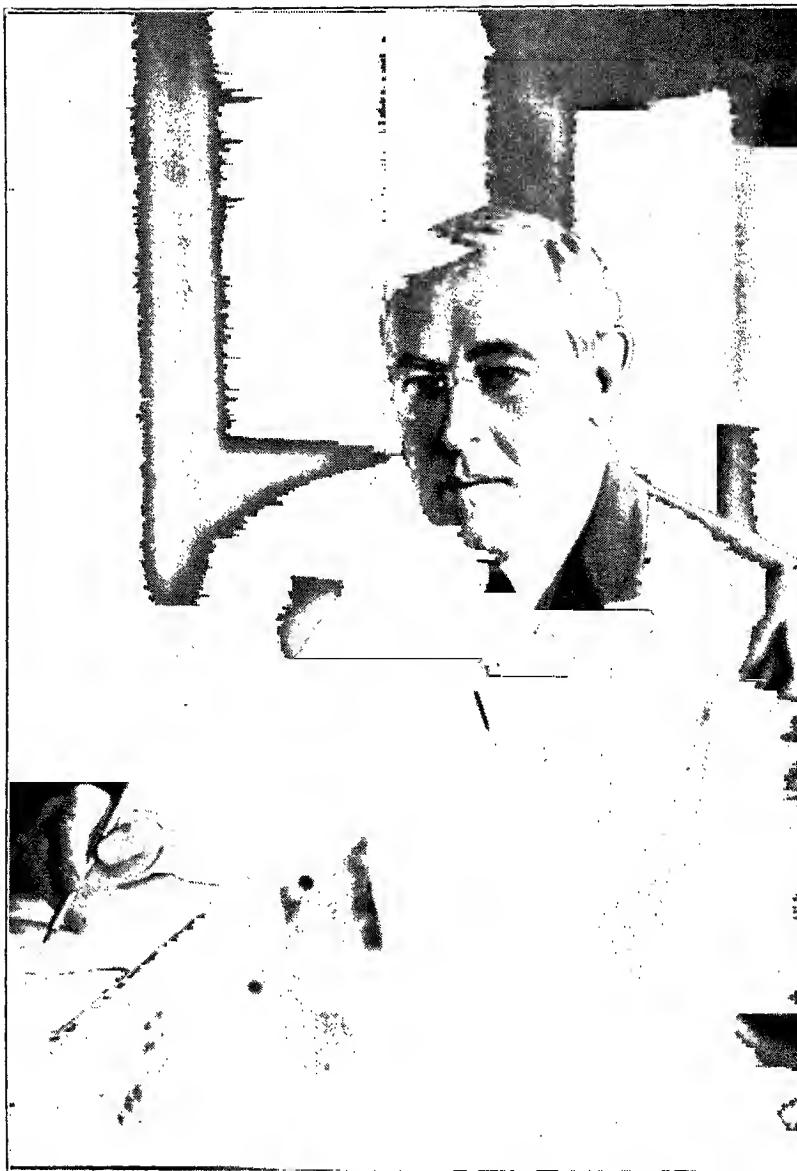


WOODROW WILSON  
AND  
WORLD SETTLEMENT





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Woodrow Wilson

# WOODROW WILSON AND WORLD SETTLEMENT

WRITTEN FROM HIS UNPUBLISHED  
AND PERSONAL MATERIAL

BY  
RAY STANNARD BAKER



ILLUSTRATIONS  
FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
FACSIMILES AND MAPS

VOLUME  
I

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK  
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*“It is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest. . . . Do not think . . . that the questions of the day are mere questions of policy and diplomacy. They are shot through with the principles of life. We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us. . . .”*

WOODROW WILSON, at Mobile, 1913.



## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS book is a record of the Peace Conference of Paris, 1919, written from the original and fundamental documents. It sets forth especially the American policies, and exhibits the struggle of Woodrow Wilson and his advisers to apply them to the bitter problems of the war-torn world. The first two volumes contain the narrative of what happened at Paris: the third is devoted wholly to the text of letters, memoranda, minutes, and other crucial documents referred to or quoted from in the narrative. A large proportion of this material is from the private files of Woodrow Wilson and little of it has hitherto been published.

It has been the aim of the writer to base this book at all points upon the documents, using actual quotations, so far as space would permit, to develop the narrative. With problems as serious as those now confronting the distracted world, it would be a light mind indeed that would turn aside for special pleading, or seek to make out a case either for a person or a programme. The great purpose of this book has therefore been to see that the issues were made clear: to show what America did: what the results really were. An honest effort has been made to bring out the weaknesses and defects in American policy as well as the elements of strength and sound leadership. However one may think of the Paris Conference, whether as a success or as a

failure, it was an adventure packed with significance, and when all is said, a remarkable exhibition of the present state of civilization, both material and spiritual: its problems, its vision, its quality of courage, its greeds and ambitions, its obsessions and fears, its vast limitations. If one could come really to understand this unique Peace Conference he would understand what was now the matter with human institutions.

"A democracy which undertakes to control its own foreign relations," said Elihu Root some time ago, "ought to know something about the subject." The beginning of that knowledge must be understanding; above everything, therefore, the effort of the writer has been not to persuade the reader to this or that point of view, but to explain and clarify. Without understanding, there can be no sound thinking, no honest judgments, none of the sympathy which must be the basis of any future world coöperation.

Yet this book has not been written without a point of view, without a positive and deeply felt conviction as to what America should do. The writer believes that the only way out of present difficulties is through coöperation, based upon a new study of the art of living together in a crowded world. He believes not only in political coöperation, as in the League of Nations, but in economic coöperation, without which there can be no sound political coöperation. He believes, above all, that the only basis of coöperation is the willingness of each of the coöoperators to assume new responsibilities, to make sacrifices of immediate interest for future benefits, and be willing if necessary *to make them first*. He believes in the truth contained in Woodrow Wilson's saying at Manchester:

"Interest does not bind men together: interest separates men. There is only one thing that can bind men together, and that is common devotion to right."

In the preparation of this book the writer is under obligations for assistance from many sources greater than he can ever repay. It is superfluous to speak of his indebtedness to Woodrow Wilson, not only for access to his invaluable private files, not only for his readiness in many instances to interpret documents where the verbal significance was not clear, but for his steady confidence and his willingness to have the entire truth, so far as the writer could get at it, told at every point.

Besides this, one of the greatest satisfactions the writer has had has been the generosity of many of the other members of the American peace delegation at Paris in giving him access to their personal files, or supplying him with their own original documents, letters, diaries, and the like; and in many cases reading and criticizing his manuscripts or proofs. This coöperation has been of the greatest value in correcting and completing the record.

The writer feels deeply indebted, among others, to Norman H. Davis, Bernard M. Baruch, and John Foster Dulles for assistance in connection with the difficult subject of the economic settlements; to Rear-Admiral Cary T. Grayson for many friendly suggestions; to Professor Douglas Johnson, Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Professor E. T. Williams, Stanley K. Hornbeck, Professor Charles Seymour, and others, for help in connection with the various territorial settlements; to Professor James T. Shotwell, to Professor Manley Hudson, to Arthur Sweetser, to Charles R. Crane, to President Henry Churchill King, to Walter S. Rogers, to Harold Phelps Stokes, to Major-General Mason M. Patrick, and finally to Colonel House and General Bliss for assistance in various ways.

The writer wishes also to acknowledge his especial indebtedness to Dr. Joseph V. Fuller of Wisconsin University, whose scholarly assistance in the analysis and

digestion of the immense mass of the documentary material has been invaluable in the preparation of this work. Doctor Fuller has made a specialty of modern European history; he was attached to the American Peace Commission during the Paris Conference as a territorial advisor; and he is the author of "Bismarck's Diplomacy at Its Zenith," published, 1922, by the Harvard University Press. He brought to the task, therefore, a thorough knowledge of the backgrounds of European diplomacy, as well as an understanding of the immediate problems of the Peace that were of the greatest value. The loyal coöperation of Doctor Fuller not only enlarged, at every point, the scope and significance of this book, but it added a zest of adventure, a flavour of common effort, to the task, which the writer can never forget.

An earnest attempt has been made to consult all of the important books so far written both here and in Europe upon the Peace Conference, or upon problems growing out of it, and references will be found to many of them in the two volumes of narrative. Copious quotations are made from the Secret Minutes of the Councils of Ten, Four, and Five, which unfortunately have not yet been published.

It is, finally, a matter of great regret that owing to lack of time and space, it has been impossible to complete and include within this book several chapters dealing with important aspects of the Peace Conference; for example, those treating of Russia and Bolshevism, Labour, Racial and Religious Minorities—the Jews particularly—and the struggle of international organizations of women for recognition at Paris. It may prove possible to work out these subjects at a later time.

Amherst, Massachusetts.

August 15, 1922.

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## IMPORTANT DATES CONNECTED WITH THE PEACE CONFERENCE

April 6, 1917—United States declares war.

November 7, 1917—Petrograd falls into the control of the Bolsheviks.

January 5, 1918—Lloyd George's War Aims Speech to the Trade Union Conference.

January 8, 1918—President Wilson's "Fourteen Points Speech" to Joint Session of Congress.

March 3, 1918—Peace at Brest-Litovsk.

July 4, 1918—President Wilson's "Four Points Speech" at Mt. Vernon.

September 27, 1918—President Wilson's "League of Nations Speech" at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York.

November 4, 1918—Meeting of Supreme War Council on reply to Germany, in which British made their reservation to Point II and the Italians to Point IX of the Fourteen.

November 11, 1918—Armistice signed.

December 2, 1918—Conference of Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando in London to discuss Peace Conference arrangements: Colonel House representing America.

December 14, 1918—President Wilson arrives in Paris, 10:30 A. M.

December 25, 1918—President Wilson with the American Army at the front.

December 28, 1918—President Wilson's Speech at the Guild-hall, London.

December 30, 1918—President Wilson's Speech at Manchester, England.

## CHRONOLOGY

January 3, 1919—President Wilson's Speech at Rome.

January 12, 1919—First meeting of the Council of Ten at the French Foreign Office.

January 18, 1919—First plenary session of the Peace Conference.

January 25, 1919—Second plenary session of the Peace Conference at which the resolution to make the Covenant "an integral part of the general treaty of peace" was adopted.

February 3, 1919—Speech of President Wilson to the French Chamber of Deputies.

February 14, 1919—Third plenary session of the Peace Conference. President Wilson presents the Covenant of the League of Nations.

February 15, 1919—The President sails for home.

February 19, 1919—Attempt made to assassinate M. Clemenceau.

March 14, 1919—The President returns to Paris.

March 15, 1919—President Wilson makes his announcement that he stands by the resolution of January 25th, that the Covenant is to be an integral part of the Treaty of Peace.

March 21, 1919—Bolshevist revolution in Hungary.

March 25, 1919—Formal meetings of the Council of Four are instituted.

April 3, 1919—The President falls ill, but Council of Four continues its meeting in the study adjoining his sick-room, with Colonel House acting as his representative. The French Crisis.

April 5, 1919—Bavaria adopts Communism.

April 7, 1919—President Wilson orders the *George Washington*, and considers the withdrawal of the American delegation from Paris.

April 11, 1919—Fourth plenary session of the Peace Conference to discuss the international labour convention.

April 14, 1919—The Germans are invited to come to Paris on April 25th.

April 19, 1919—Beginning of formal minutes of the Council of Four.

April 23, 1919—Italian Crisis acute: President Wilson's statement to the public on the problem of Fiume.

April 24, 1919—Orlando's reply. Orlando, with some of his colleagues, leaves for Italy.

April 28, 1919—Fifth plenary session of the Peace Conference. Revised Covenant of the League of Nations adopted and full text published. Japanese Crisis.

April 30, 1919—Settlement of the Japanese claims consummated.

May 6, 1919—Sixth plenary session of the Peace Conference approves the German treaty. Foch protests. Italians return.

May 7, 1919—Treaty presented to the Germans at Versailles.

May 14, 1919—The Austrians arrive at St. Germain.

May 29, 1919—Seventh plenary session of the Peace Conference receives the incomplete Austrian Treaty.

May 31, 1919—Eighth plenary session of the Peace Conference with the small powers in attendance.

June 2, 1919—Treaty presented to the Austrians at St. Germain.

June 3, 1919—Conference of American Delegation with President Wilson to discuss changes in Treaty.

June 28, 1919—The German Treaty signed at Versailles, and President Wilson sails for America.

July 8, 1919—President Wilson arrives in New York.

July 10, 1919—President Wilson lays Treaty of Peace before the Senate.

July 31, 1919—Hearings on Treaty begin before Committee on Foreign Relations of United States Senate.

August 19, 1919—Conference of President Wilson with United States Senators at Washington.

September 29, 1919—The President returns from his Western trip, broken in health, to Washington.

October 4, 1919—The President is stricken with paralysis.

## CHRONOLOGY

October 29, 1919—International Labour Conference, a branch of the League of Nations, held at Washington.

January 16, 1920—First meeting of the Council of the League of Nations.

November 15, 1920—First meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations.

November 12, 1921—The Washington Conference begins.

April 10, 1922—The Genoa Conference begins.

June 15, 1922—The Hague Conference begins.

## INTRODUCTION

### SOURCES OF MATERIAL—PRESIDENT WILSON'S DOCUMENTS

PRESIDENT WILSON kept on his desk at Paris during the Peace Conference a large steel document box with a spring lock. I have seen him at the close of the day, after the session of the Council of Four, methodically put into this box all the papers and memoranda which had come to him in the course of the day's proceedings. From time to time, as the box filled up and the documents were no longer required, they were removed to larger boxes and trunks, one of them beautifully made by the ship's carpenter of the *George Washington*. All of these were brought home with him to the White House.

In the winter of 1920-1921 great pressure was brought to bear upon the President to give his own account of what happened at Paris. He had been under long and bitter attack, and his friends, confident that the best response to these criticisms was a true and complete account of the conference, urged him both by letter and by word of mouth to present the history of the events, using actual records and documents.

But the President, who had been desperately ill, was weighed down with the burdens of his closing Administration. Moreover, no man who ever sat in the White House

was so little self-explanatory as Mr. Wilson. He rarely defended himself when attacked, nor gave his friends the ammunition for such a defense. His end of a personal controversy was silence—to some of his enemies an infuriating silence. He seemed incapable of presenting or dramatizing his own actions. A student of his voluminous speeches and writings will find few pages devoted to telling what he did, how he did it, or why. He has been a great actor upon the world's stage, the chief figure in supreme events; but he does not readily visualize either events or personalities; his characteristic and instinctive interest is in ideas. He can tell what he thinks and hopes and believes—no living man can do it better—but he has no genius for telling what he did.

On December 18, 1920, he wrote to me as follows: It is clear to me that it will not be possible for me to write anything such as you suggest, but I believe that you could do it admirably. \* \* \* \*

On December 27 he wrote a letter the facsimile of which appears on the opposite page.

In January, 1921, I began working upon these documents at the White House. They were in two trunks and three steel boxes, and for the most part had not been touched since the President put them aside in Paris. They can be grouped in three categories:

First—The complete minutes from April 19 to June 24, 1919, of the Council of Four (which consisted of the President of the United States, Mr. Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, M. Clemenceau, President of the Council of France, and Signor Orlando, Premier of Italy).

A widespread belief has existed that no records were kept of the crucially important meetings of the Four. It is true that the first two or three weeks of these confer-

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

27 December, 1920

My dear Baker,

Thank you for your letter of December twenty-third, which gave me a great deal of pleasure. I have a trunk full of papers, and the next time you are down here I would like to have you go through them and see what they are and what the best use is that can be made of them. I plunked them into the trunk in Paris and have not had time or physical energy even to sort or arrange them. I am looking forward with great satisfaction to the work you are purposing to do, and have no doubt that it will be of the highest value.

With the best wishes of the season,

Cordially and faithfully yours,



Mr. Ray Stannard Baker,  
Amherst, Massachusetts.

ences, from about March 24 to April 19, were informal; and while no official minutes in English were made of the actual conversations this period is excellently documented with memoranda, letters, reports, and copies of resolutions; and there exist informal records, such as my own, of daily conversations with the President, which fill the gap. After April 19, however, and until the close of the conference, a remarkably complete and methodical record of the entire proceedings was kept. In one or two instances exact stenographic reports of the conversation are in existence; but for the most part the record was made in English by Sir Maurice Hankey of the British Foreign Office, who was the Secretary of the Four. He was sometimes the only man present with the Four or the Three; but usually Professor Mantoux, the French interpreter, was there, and when Orlando attended he also had his secretary, Count Aldrovandi, with him; for Orlando was the only one of the Four who spoke no English. Except upon two or three occasions, no American secretary attended these sessions.

While Hankey's minutes are not verbatim, but are written in the English style of indirect narrative, reporting speeches and discussion in the third person, they reach, with the appendices, the rather tremendous bulk of some 1,800 typewritten pages, legal size, probably not far short of three quarters of a million words, and give a remarkably faithful, and often vivid, account of the discussions from day to day. Hankey was one of those incredibly able and efficient men of the super-secretarial type, who came into prominence at the Peace Conference. Mantoux was another, of whom I hope to speak again.

This record of the Council of Four, together with the minutes of the Council of Ten (consisting of the five chief representatives and Foreign Ministers of the great

powers—America, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan), from January 12, 1919, to June 17 (although the Ten, after March 15, met infrequently), and the so-called Council of Foreign Ministers, the “Little Five” (Secretary Lansing for America, Mr. Balfour for Great Britain, M. Pichon for France, Baron Sonnino for Italy, and Baron Makino, though he was not a Foreign Minister, for Japan), from March 27 to June 12, of which I have a complete file—these latter records also comprising, with their appendices, over 1,200 typewritten pages, some half-million words—make up the official record in English of the Peace Conference, none of which has yet been published.

Second—The second category includes a large number of reports and memoranda made by the members of the American delegation for the President, also British and French reports that came into his hands in the course of the discussions, together with many of the records and minutes of the subsidiary commissions, such as the Supreme Economic Council, and the various expert and investigatory committees. These documents contain much valuable historical material, revealing the attitude of the various nations represented at Paris at each point in the discussions, and the exact opinions of the delegates and experts.

In this category, also, I should place the President's own invaluable memoranda, often on the margins of documents, sometimes upon separate sheets written upon his typewriter or in his own stenographic hieroglyphics—which he has, in many cases, interpreted for the writer. Especially valuable and interesting are the notations in the President's hand showing the development of the League of Nations Covenant and the extraordinary number of changes made in certain of the articles. Here also are the original drafts of the Covenant made by the

President, Colonel House, Lord Robert Cecil, Baron Phillimore's Committee, General Smuts, M. Bourgeois, the Italian and Swiss schemes, and others. All this material came naturally into the hands of Mr. Wilson. There is nowhere probably a more complete or explanatory record of every step in the development of the League Covenant than this.

Third—The third category, in many ways the most interesting of any, contains the varied correspondence, petitions, resolutions, letters, which came personally to the President before and during the Peace Conference, from every part of the world. They lay bare in an extraordinary way—these appeals to the President for help in a hundred causes—how the stricken people of the nations turned with hope and faith to America, how bitter the suffering was, and how vital the need. I found the examination of this material a breathless and exciting experience, like going through a treasure chest, not filled with gold, but with the very souls of mankind. Here, for example, is a bulky petition from 17,000 Jugoslavs in the Fiume district beautifully bound in embroidered silk, with an eloquent statement of how the names had been collected, partly by girls and women, sometimes with great risk to themselves. Here are pathetic appeals from starving Armenians, discontented Persians, suffering Albanians, ambitious Ukrainians, all eager to get the ear and the friendly help of America; here are communications in the strangest variety and from every sort of people; autograph letters from most of the heads of European nations—for example, one from the King of Spain written in English and enclosing a letter in German from "my cousin Charles, the late Emperor of Austria"; here letters from Lloyd George, memoranda from Clemenceau and Orlando, appeals from leaders and publicists of America,

Great Britain, France, and other countries, suggestions from experts not connected with the Conference, warnings from radical leaders; an extraordinary exhibit of the thought of the world.

Those who have a picture of the President immured in a kind of cloister at Paris and cut off from knowledge of what the world was thinking about have, of course, no knowledge of these sources of information and advice. It was the commonest experience, at Paris, to find eager delegations who had come hundreds of miles, often with difficulty and danger, trying to get to the President to give him information he already possessed. It would have been better, perhaps, upon the human side, if the President could have seen face to face all these people—he did see an extraordinary variety of them—for they would have gone away feeling that they had had a real part in shaping the fate of the world; this was not only physically impossible but it was not the way the President worked. His training in all his previous life, it should not be forgotten, had been that of the scholar, the student, not the politician, accustomed to getting his information, not from people, but out of books, documents, letters—the written word. Having thus the essence of the matter, he probably underestimated the value of these human contacts. And, too, often it was not real information these delegations had to offer, but arguments, propaganda, irrelevant appeals for sympathy.

In the preparation of this history the writer has also had the great advantage of many conversations, both at Paris and since, with various members of the commissions, both American and foreign, and has been able thus to supplement his own knowledge of specific events. He has also had the good fortune to see the personal records and diaries made by some of the men who were there and

to examine the documents brought home by them. I suppose there was never a conference in which every human being present was so struck with a kind of historic awe. Almost everyone, except the President, kept a diary, of which the President was undoubtedly the central object, the chief interest. Some of them wrote surreptitiously, some boldly and without shame. Secretary Lansing was an indefatigable diarist. I remember seeing him many times sitting alone in his big, empty office, writing in a small, neat book, in a small, neat, formal hand. When one came in to talk with him, he would lay down his pen, reach for a pad of paper, and during the conversation draw one after another pencil sketches of strange, grotesque, and sinister faces. He worked equally well with his right or left hand. In the course of the months at Paris, for he occupied his time in the conferences in the same way, he must have drawn thousands of such pictures.

Colonel House dictated his record to his secretary, sitting on a long couch with a gay-coloured blanket thrown over his legs. He spoke in a smooth, even voice, bringing his hands together softly from time to time, sometimes just touching the finger-tips, sometimes the whole palms. General Bliss wrote regularly and voluminously in long-hand, and like the outright and truthful old soldier he is, made no bones about it. It was with him a method of clarifying his own thoughts rather than of setting down an account of events. I shall like his memoirs best of all, I think, when he comes to publish them. As for the others who kept records in that vast Crillon establishment they were as the sands of the sea, and the sound of their pens (one fancied he could identify it finally in the watches of the night) was like the washing of waves on the beach.

So much for the documentary and other material. The importance of the subject to be treated must excuse refer-

ence also to the writer's own sources of knowledge at Paris.

I spent nearly all of the year 1918 as a Special Commissioner of the State Department, visiting England, France, and Italy, and making a series of reports upon certain economic and political conditions in the allied countries. These reports went primarily to the State Department and also to Colonel House, who was at the head of the President's Commission of Inquiry, and some were transmitted direct to the President himself. In the course of this year of tremendous events I met many of the important leaders in the allied countries and endeavoured especially to see and understand the powerful undercurrents, the labour and liberal movements, at work in all these countries. I had also a close view of the war itself on the French and Belgian fronts, and in Italy; I saw the stupendous efforts of our own army, and, at first hand, the devastation wrought by the Germans. This experience I found invaluable in giving me a clear understanding of the backgrounds of the Peace Conference; the real foundations of military force and economic need upon which it rested; and the atmosphere of suffering, dread, hatred, newly aroused ambitions, in which, at Paris, the discussions took place. Too many of the critics in America of the Conference have been without an understanding of these underlying and precedent conditions.

In December, 1918, several weeks before the Peace Conference opened, President Wilson in the following letter to Colonel House, wherein he also outlined the general method of publicity to be employed, appointed the writer to direct the press arrangements of the American Commission:

MY DEAR HOUSE:

I have been thinking a great deal lately about the contact of the commission with the public through the press and particularly about the way in which the commission should deal with the newspaper men

who have come over from the United States. I have come to the conclusion that much the best way to handle the matter is for you and the other Commissioners to hold a brief meeting each day and invite the representatives of the press to come in at each meeting for such interchange of information or suggestion as may be thought necessary. This I am sure is preferable to any formal plan or to any less definite arrangement.

I am convinced also that the preparation of all the press matter that is to be issued from the commission is a task calling for a particular sort of experienced ability. I beg, therefore, that you and your fellow Commissioners will agree to the appointment of Mr. Ray Stannard Baker as your representative in the performance of this duty. Mr. Baker enjoys my confidence in a very high degree and I have no hesitation in commending him to you as a man of ability, vision and ideals. He has been over here for the better part of a year, has established relations which will be of the highest value, and is particularly esteemed by the very class of persons to whom it will be most advantageous to us to be properly interpreted in the news that we have to issue. If you see no conclusive objection to this, I would suggest that you request Mr. Baker to do us the very great service of acting in this capacity.

I am writing in the same terms to the other members of the commission.

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed) WOODROW WILSON.

So it became my task to organize the Press Bureau of the American Commission, and offices were opened at No. 4 Place de la Concorde, near the Hotel Crillon. Through this office passed all the official news of the Conference; and it became, moreover, a centre at which gathered the representatives of all the delegations and commissions from all countries that came to Paris; everyone who was seeking the support of American influence and American opinion, and who was not! We also saw all the various delegations from America—the Irish, the Jews, the labour leaders, the women's organizations, the Negroes. It was one of the busiest offices of the commission.

The writer's duties brought him into contact with the American Commissioners every morning before the daily session with the correspondents, and during all the later months of the Conference he saw the President each afternoon following the close of the session of the Council of Four (sometimes oftener), went over fully the happenings of the day, determined upon exactly what should be made public, and afterward met the American correspondents. He crossed the ocean three times on the *George Washington* with the President, and was able to serve him, in several instances, in important matters not connected with publicity. The Supreme Economic Council also appointed him as a member of the board of four men, one from each nation, to direct its publicity, and the records of this important commission thus came into his hands.

The Press Bureau, under his direction, had charge of making and transmitting the American summary of the Treaty.

The writer offers no excuse for the personal note he employs in various parts of this narrative; for only thus can he convey what he himself saw and knew. He is doing it also with the intent of making it clear that the judgments of men and events are his own and not those of the President. The President's own views are expressed with great completeness in the documents, memoranda, and letters which are here reproduced or quoted from.

It is only honest to say that the writer did not agree with the President in some of his conclusions at Paris, and argued, before the decision was made, a different course of action from the one taken, as in the Shantung matter. He finds in his journal of April 29:

I went up to the President's house at 9 o'clock this morning, where I laid before him the notes I had made, together with the various memoranda furnished to me by Williams and Hornbeck (the Far Eastern experts) and by Wellington Koo and others of the Chinese

delegation. There is no possible doubt where the President's own sympathies lie. He is for the full rights of the Chinese. I told him that the sympathy of the world was undoubtedly with the Chinese.

"I know that," he said.

I made as strong a case as I could for the Chinese position, urging some postponement at least. The President pointed out how inextricably the whole matter was tied up with the old secret treaties, how Britain felt herself bound to Japan, and how, with Italy already out of the conference and Belgium bitterly discontented, the defection of Japan, not an unreasonable possibility, might not only break up the Peace Conference, but destroy the League of Nations.

It was also my belief that a much broader publicity, a constructive publicity, could have been had at the conference and this view was frequently urged upon the President and upon the Commissioners. I still believe that one of the greatest mistakes made at the conference, particularly for America, was a want of better understanding of what happened there and the exact reasons why, in each particular case, the President decided as he did, for I am confident that if the American people could know what the problems were in shell-shocked Europe in 1919, the problems those desperately harassed leaders at Paris had to meet, there would to-day be a better and more sympathetic understanding of our newly developing international relationships. This whole problem of publicity and secrecy at Paris will be considered in later chapters.

But it must be clearly said that I believed then in the essential soundness of the great principles the President laid down at Paris, and do so still; that I had then, and have still, complete faith in the absolute sincerity of the President's purpose; and the conviction that whatever may have been his mistakes, he fought for his principles under such difficulties and in such an atmosphere as the American people do not yet understand.

The President did not in those brief months achieve

the "new world," the "new order," he so nobly phrased, so ardently desired, and so continuously fought for, but he chose the battleground and set forth some of the issues which will engage the thought of the world for years to come. And there is no more instructive failure—if it was failure—than the President's at Paris, for when we approach it with a desire not to condemn or defend, but to understand, it reveals, as nothing else could, the real elements of the struggle which the liberals of the world have yet before them. We see as in a spotlight the defects of our own governmental machinery as it concerns foreign affairs; we are able to judge more clearly the state of our own public opinion, and above all to get a truer sense of our relationships with the other great nations of the world.

Finally, we see in high relief the figure of an extraordinary human being, with supreme qualities of many kinds, with temperamental and physical limitations, who will never cease to fascinate the historian and biographer of representative and decisive characters.

Unless Americans can apprehend what really happened at Paris, what forces we had to meet there, how we were led, and what we did, we can scarcely go ahead with firm ground under our feet to discuss what to do next. Paris must assuredly be the springboard for any future plunge into foreign affairs. Consequently, this is an American narrative, from an American point of view. It is the account of what happened by one who was there, who knew the men engaged, and who had then and has had since, in even larger measure, full access to the documents—not merely the formal records, but those tentative proposals, memoranda, and correspondence which often reveal, in their impulsive sincerity, later smoothed into conventional complaisances, the true purposes, the real desires, of the actors upon that great stage.



PART I

FOUNDATIONS OF THE PEACE  
CONFERENCE



# WOODROW WILSON AND WORLD SETTLEMENT

## CHAPTER I

### THE AMERICAN PEACE ARGOSY SAILS: WOODROW WILSON'S VISION OF THE PEACE

THREE weeks and three days after the last victorious shots of the great war had been fired by Yankee doughboys in the French Argonne the American peace argosy—the *George Washington*, with accompanying warships—dropped down through the bedecked and beflagged harbour of New York, a new *Santa Maria* on its extraordinary voyage of discovery to an unknown world. The great ship passed majestically out through the Narrows, with airplanes cutting the sky above and the forts on either hand roaring with unprecedented salutes of twenty-one guns; for never before had a President of the United States set sail for a foreign land.

It was at a time before the power and the glory, the exaltion and emotion of victory had died away, and there was something triumphant about the departure of this American ship. It bore with it the leader who beyond any other in those last terrible years of the World War had touched the imagination of humanity and had lifted the fainting spirits of the allied fighters by giving them a new vision of what lay beyond their suffering. There was a near passage to the Indies!

"During this war," said a writer in *L'Illustration* of Paris—but this was before the war closed—"it has been toward Wilson that our leaders have most turned; we looked to him as one might look at a clock. What does Wilson say? What does he think? What will he do? Such were the daily questions of the peoples. . . . ."

It was the President's custom at a certain time each day during his voyages across the Atlantic—the present writer accompanied him upon three of them—to tramp up and down the broad decks of the ship. Sometimes he walked with Mrs. Wilson, sometimes with his physician, Dr. Grayson, infrequently with other members of the party, but in reality he was always alone. On chance meetings at a turn of a passage, or the foot of a gangway, there were sometimes moments of good common talk—and the President is never more interesting, more human, than in these brief meetings—but there was rarely a feeling of genuine contact upon the great things that really mattered. Sometimes he stood quite still at the forward rail, looking off across the wintry sea—toward Europe.

In the time of exalted emotion before the war closed he had been accepted by the people of the nations as a veritable prophet, and his words had become a living force, "worth armies," in the world. "In the eyes of millions of people," wrote Count Czernin of Austria, "his programme opened up a world of hope." He set the allied cause upon a new moral plane. The statesmen of the allied nations, recognizing the power of this wave of idealism, had seized upon it eagerly as a means of unification and remoralization, and great American agencies of publicity had helped to popularize and legendize it. They had done their work even too well. They had led the world to expect too much. But if it acted upon the allied

nations as an invigorator, it equally served to disintegrate the unity of the Central Powers—as, indeed, it was intended to do.

In Italy, during the fall of that year (1918), I had seen extraordinary evidences of this feeling. The President's pictures were in every window. I was even told, in that time of exaggerated speech, that the peasants in some parts of Italy set candles to burn before them. His “sculptured words” I saw at Turin emblazoned on every kiosk; his name was on every tongue. Hope lay in America. And what was more exuberantly evident in the Latin south was true also in the north. Especially was he the hope of the weak countries of Central Europe, for in him they saw also the good-will of America. So strong was the feeling for him as the “liberator of Poland,” that when university men met each other—one of them told me this—they struck hands and cried out “Wilson!” as a greeting.

The President had brought with him on the *George Washington* a large collection of documents which had been transmitted to the White House mostly during the three feverish weeks after the Armistice. His tasks at that time were never more staggering, for the unexpected cessation of hostilities while the American war machine was in full action involved vast problems. Congress was in session, many domestic questions pressed for decision. He had had little time to consider in detail what might lie ahead of America at the settlements; but he had heard enough of the premonitory rumblings—they were not wanting even in the United States Senate—to know that it might take a hard fight to realize at Paris the principles he had laid down as the basis of the peace. He had, therefore, decided to break all precedents, go to Europe himself, and take a part in the making of the

peace. He gave his reasons for so doing in his address to Congress on December 2, three days before sailing.

The peace settlements which are now to be agreed upon are of transcendent importance, both to us and to the rest of the world, and I know of no business or interest which should take precedence of them. The gallant men of our armed forces on land and sea have conspicuously fought for the ideals which they knew to be the ideals of their country. I have sought to express those ideals; they have accepted my statements of them as the substance of their own thought and purpose, as the associated governments have accepted them; I owe it to them to see to it, so far as in me lies, that no false or mistaken interpretation is put upon them, and no possible effort omitted to realize them. It is now my duty to play my full part in making good what they offered their life's blood to obtain. I can think of no call to service which would transcend this.

Now that he was on the ocean between the two worlds—the New World and the Old World, the old order and the new—he began to see more clearly the concrete problems which lay just beyond America. There in his dispatch case, in his cabin on the *George Washington*, was the extraordinary collection of documents to which I have referred. We know the picture of the world they give, for we have them here before us. We know also how they were added to during that voyage by the blue-clad messenger who came down from the upper deck of the ship day by day with the messages by wireless. Not even a stormy ocean could keep out the woes of the world.

One predominant note marks these papers: that of passionate and hopeful appeal, rising sometimes to peremptory demand. There are indeed other documents here—correspondence with Mr. Balfour regarding the relief of starving Europe, a memorandum from the German Government asserting that it had truly reformed itself, news of the formation of a republic in Austria, a

number of urgent reports regarding conditions in Russia, a letter from Cardinal Gibbons hoping the President will call on the Pope, messages from Colonel House, who is already in Europe, regarding the first meeting of Lloyd George, Clemenceau, and Orlando (on December 2 and 3) to discuss plans for the coming Peace Conference, certain reports and essays from experts on the problems of the settlements and the proposed League of Nations. But dwarfing all these important documents is the fire-hot revelation, in many appeals, of what it was that the world expected or demanded of America and of this American President. Here are poured out, not only the suffering, the longing, the need of the world, but also the ambition, the fear, and the greed.

It is impossible to give more than glimpses of this material—but perhaps enough to show the veritable picture that must have come now sharply into the President's mind.

“You are leaving America,” says a final impassioned appeal from Armenians (December 2), “without having uttered the reassuring word as to the future of Armenia which you did in the cases of other oppressed nationalities. Why should we have anything further to do with Turks or others and not get unconditionally what is ours?”

Here is a letter from hopeful Ukrainians of Russia appealing for the right to govern themselves:

They are desirous of having introduced and established in their motherland, the Ukraine, American ideals of government and the American system of education, in order to perpetuate sound democratic principles among their people.

Here is an appeal of Rumanians for their fellow countrymen in Hungary; here are stories of cruelty in Shantung; here are voluminous documents from the

Jews of the world relating to the future of Palestine; here is an appeal from Persia against Russian and British domination.

"The cause of Christianity," says a dispatch from China to the President, "is largely tied up with what you advocate at the Peace Conference, and what it does."

Here are burning words from a Korean delegation under date of November 20, interpreting his words according to their desires:

The war just finished has decided once for all the contest between democracy and autocracy, and President Wilson has said very truly that all homogeneous nations that have a separate and distinct language, civilization and culture ought to be allowed independence. . . . Under Japanese control Korea as a nation is doomed to extinction. Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Korea, hereby appeal to the people and the Government of the civilized world to take up the cause of Korea against Japan.

There seemed to be an impression that America would and could heal all the old grievances of the world, memories of wrongs committed in past times by one nation against another, and inherited misunderstandings that have become festering sores. The Swedes, for example, though they had had no part in the war, and, indeed, had profited by it, ask the President for the correction of the "Crime of '64" and demand the Aaland Islands, and Belgium wants a revision of the treaty of '39.

There is apparently no injury too old, no grievance too trivial, but this coming millennial peace congress shall settle and cure it.

Even wrongs done by Napoleon shall be righted. Poland asks to have returned to her—this was a demand made later at the Conference—the historic archives taken by Austria in the eighteenth century, and Belgium seeks to recover Rubens's pictures, the "Golden Fleece" and

other art objects carried away about the time of the American Revolution.

And if these nations were to have back their antiques and their art treasures, Vienna, on her part, broken and beaten, begs that she be not despoiled. I find among the President's papers this letter:

I have a pathetic appeal from Loehr, Keeper of Coins and Medals at Vienna. It appears that Italy, Jugoslavia, the Czechs, &c., threaten to break up the Vienna collection, taking each a part to stock their own museums. As he says, this would be equivalent to destroying the scientific value of the collections. Italy has already taken a lot of pictures. . . . I feel very strongly . . . that the Peace Conference ought to appoint a small commission to prevent this spoliation.

And finally one can scarcely resist putting in a few sentences from the appeal of the Albanians to the President:

We come, therefore, to you, sir, as to the respected chief of the most powerful democracy, as to the man who has placed the sentiment of justice far above all interests. . . . Today Albania is struggling painfully in the hands of those who wish once more to dismember her and who wish to take possession of territories which do not belong to them and which have never belonged to them. Unfortunately for her, Albania, a poor country, has found no advocate in Europe to take her part. Only a few isolated persons, struck by the injustice committed against our country, have helped us by speech and by writing. They do not seem to have found any echo in the Chancelleries from which there will issue shortly the destinies of a Europe one would desire to see regenerated.

Here, in short, was the heart of the world laid bare. They are petitions for the most part pathetic enough and, like so many prayers, for immediate and material ends and sometimes for ends which, if achieved, might well do the petitioner more harm than good. So many

ask for islands and mines and harbours and secure boundaries and Rubens pictures and antique coins!

In all this collection of appeals which the President took with him on the *George Washington* I do not find a single one, either from strong nations or weak, that contains an offer to help him or help America unreservedly or disinterestedly in applying at Paris the principles which everyone had so acclaimed as the basis of the peace. There are a few wistful or warning letters from individuals like one from Bishop Gore of Oxford, which still breathe confidence and offer support, but for the most part they all ask America to do something immediately for them, to relieve some dire need—and there were, indeed, terrible enough needs to be relieved—to give them liberty, to enable them to realize some passionate interest or ambition. Possibly a different attitude was not to be expected at such a time, but the fact must be noted in passing.

We knew how deeply the consideration of these appeals struck home to the President there on the *George Washington* and how clearly he sensed even then what might be the result at Paris, for we have a report of what he said one evening, while walking the deck, to one of his friends, Mr. Creel.

It is to America that the whole world turns today, not only with its wrongs, but with its hopes and grievances. The hungry expect us to feed them, the roofless look to us for shelter, the sick of heart and body depend upon us for cure. All of these expectations have in them the quality of terrible urgency. There must be no delay. . . . Yet you know, and I know, that these ancient wrongs, these present unhappinesses, are not to be remedied in a day or with a wave of the hand. What I seem to see—with all my heart I hope that I am wrong—is a tragedy of disappointment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>“The War, the World, and Wilson,” by George Creel, p. 163.

But even the access he had to the actual demands as set forth in these documents could not at that time, one is sure, have revealed to him the obstinacy with which these problems would present themselves at the coming conference. So much was hidden from America because of her lack of knowledge of European affairs, the power of European traditions, the urgency of European need. She was handicapped in ways she did not know by years of prideful isolation and self-sufficiency. But the President, even at this time, saw the possibility of a "tragedy of disappointment."

What was it then—what faith, what warrant of strength, what deep source of confidence did he have in confronting such a situation?

Three days before the *George Washington* sailed into Brest Harbour in a blaze of glory the President called together a group of the delegation for a conference. There were two members of the Peace Commission itself on the ship, Secretary Lansing and Mr. White (Colonel House and General Bliss being already in Europe), but the great body of the delegation was made up of geographers, historians, economists, and others upon whom the President was to depend for the basic facts to be used in the coming discussions. Many of these men had been at work for months (under the direction of Colonel House's Inquiry) in gathering material of every sort which might contribute to the solution of the problems raised at Paris. They had brought along with them, in great boxes now stored in the hold of the ship, a substantial library of books, documents, reports, together with a complete equipment of maps.

We have no record of this meeting in the ornate cabin of the *George Washington* save notes made at the time by Dr. Isaiah Bowman (which he has intrusted to me);

but these notes show plainly enough what lay in the President's mind at the time, and what he proposed to do. Condensed to its essentials, the President said that the American delegation would be the only people at the Conference with a disinterested point of view; it was supremely necessary to "follow the opinions of mankind and to express the will of the people rather than that of their leaders at the Conference," and that the decisions must rest upon this opinion of mankind and "not upon the previous determinations and diplomatic schemes of the assembled representatives." Above all, there must be an organization, a league of nations, to give both security and elasticity to the settlements, and to make easier alterations in them after the time of present passion had subsided.

He thought that the German colonies should be declared the common property of the League of Nations and administered by small nations. The resources of each colony should be available to all members of the League, and in this and in other matters involving international relations the world would be intolerable if only "arrangement" ensued; that this was a peace conference in which arrangements could not be made in the old style. And the problem of the Conference—he referred particularly to the question of German indemnity—must not be left "in purely political hands," but must be studied by commissions. He made a frank appeal to the experts there for their coöperation during the Conference.

"Tell me what is right," he said, "and I'll fight for it; give me a guaranteed position."

He also showed that he was under no illusions as to the fight that was coming. Anticipating the difficulties of the Conference in view of the suggestion he had made re-

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## DIPLOMATS AND THE SHADOW ON THE BLIND



### THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE

"President Wilson arrives in Paris." — News Item

Cartoon in a British labour paper a few weeks before the Conference opened in Paris



specting the desires of the people of the world for a new order, he remarked, "If it won't work, it must be made to work," because the world was faced by a task of terrible proportions and only the adoption of a cleansing process would regenerate it.

The poison of Bolshevism, he said, was accepted readily because "it is a protest against the way in which the world has worked." It was to be our business at the Peace Conference to fight for a new order, "agreeably if we can, disagreeably if we must."

Such was the fighting message of the President to his associates there on the ship three days before they arrived in France. But we need to examine the American idea more in detail. What was the essence of the President's programme? What did he mean by a "new order"? If Bolshevism was a protest against "the way in which the world has worked," what had he to suggest as a remedy?

There were two great central ideas in his programme, both American in their origin. One concerned the political rights and liberties of human kind, the other the obligations and controls of humankind. Specifically, they were:

1. The right of "self-determination" of peoples; that government must rest upon the "consent of the governed."
2. The obligation to coöperate in a world association for mutual aid and protection: in short, a league of nations.

Here was the two-fold balanced programme of the President, containing the two inevitable and struggling principles of government in a democracy; expressed, for example, in some of its phases all through American history in the balance between the "State rights" and "Federal power."

However he may have been attacked by opponents

of either of these principles, the President never at any time thought of them as separate; he always, both in speech and action, linked them together. He put his programme in a nutshell in his Mount Vernon speech July 4, 1918:

These great objects (of the peace) can be put in a single sentence. What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.

In the principles, therefore, which he laid down in 1917-1918, Wilson brought nothing new or original to the world. They had long been the common coin of American oratory. They were, indeed, far older than America; they had been often upon the lips of reformers and prophetic statesmen of other nations. They had found expression in the most distinctive of American poetry, Emerson and Whitman. Lincoln had affirmed the vital idea in his phrase, "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Over and over again the President set forth the concept of "self-determination."

Peoples [he said] are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty—as if they were mere chattels and pawns of a game.

Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned.

Self-determination . . . is an imperative principle of action which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.

Here he was only reiterating what had been fought for and laid down in the greatest American documents: the Virginia Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution.

"That all power is vested in and consequently derived from the people," said the Virginia Bill of Rights.

"Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," said the Declaration of Independence.

"We, the people," said the Constitution, "do ordain and establish this Constitution."

But the idea of "government by consent of the governed" was no more American than the idea of association for mutual protection which lies at the root of the entire American system—"to form," in the words of the Constitution, "a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense." Our whole Federal system has here its roots.

Thus it was the glowing idea of the Declaration of Independence, "government by the consent of the governed," that Wilson put into the first principle of his programme; it was the wise statesmanship of the Constitution that he hoped to imitate, so far as it was possible to do under widely different and more difficult conditions, in the second half of his programme.

As he declared in his address to the Senate of January 22, 1917:

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.

His faith in these American principles was rooted in the deepest soil of his intense, hard-knit, lonely, passionately determined nature. All his life long he had been a student of American history, the American Constitution, American ideals. He had been a student especially of the heroic period of the nation and of the principles upon which it was founded. The titles of his earlier books ex-

press these deep interests: "Life of George Washington," "History of the United States," "Congressional Government," "The State," "Constitutional Government in the United States."

The President had come of a stock—the Scotch and Scotch-Irish—which is not only deeply religious, but also passionately devoted to the ideals of freedom. It was almost as a religious faith that he had grasped and accepted the fundamental American doctrines. "Every man," he said in an address, November 4, 1916, "who has read and studied the great annals of this country may feel his blood warm as he feels these great forces of humanity growing stronger and stronger."

It is unfortunate at Paris that the phrase "self-determination" became a kind of shibboleth of the peace, a mystic formula, for it represents only half of the programme of the President. It was so easy to cry for rights; so difficult, especially at that moment when the fears and hatreds of the war were still so acute, to ask the nations to assume the obligations of a new association. It was left for President Wilson, at times almost alone, to support the other and equally essential half of his programme; and this he did to the bitter end. For he saw that it was futile to hope for the realization of the one without the other.

There can be no doubt that the President had put into eloquent words what America meant in its highest aspirations to the great masses of her own people and to the world. And yet the question may be raised here—though this is not the place to argue it—as to how far the rich and powerful America of 1917 and 1918 accepted the full implication of these principles. Did America really believe in applying to other countries the principles which had made her free and great? Did she believe they could be

applied? The question may also be raised how far a set of principles so exclusively political were fitted to meet the problems of a world in which economic issues had become so insistent and pressing. But the discussion of that problem must be left for another part of this book. (Part VIII, Volume II.)

There was on this very ship, also sailing away to Europe to help settle the war, a member of the appointed Peace Commission, the President's Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, who was also walking the decks of the *George Washington* and thinking about the coming conference. And we find him confiding some of those thoughts secretly to his diary soon after his arrival in Paris:

The more I think about the President's declaration as to the right of "self-determination," the more convinced I am of the danger of putting such ideas into the minds of certain races. It is bound to be the basis of impossible demands on the Peace Congress and create trouble in many lands. . . .

The phrase is simply loaded with dynamite. . . . What a calamity that the phrase was ever uttered! What misery it will cause!<sup>1</sup>

Considered alone, indeed, as Mr. Lansing considers it (for his imagination never lifted to the idea of a new and effective world association of nations), it was indeed a phrase full of dynamite. His vision was one of safety rather than of service. He speaks of "national safety as the primary object to be attained in territorial settlements." So also did the Germans argue, when they scrapped their treaty and burst into Belgium, that the interest and safety of their State was superior to any other consideration, so did the allied Governments when they signed the secret treaties of 1915, 1916, and 1917,

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<sup>1</sup>"The Peace Negotiations," by Robert Lansing, p. 97.

and this struggle between the idea of the rights and interests of peoples and the interest and safety of States lay at the root of most, if not all, of the problems at Paris.

But, dynamite or no dynamite, the President believed to the very roots of his being in the right of peoples to control their own government and order their own lives—and he set it forth with blazing power and directness. If the American doctrine endangered the old order of the world, then there must be a new order.

And where Mr. Lansing is timidly fearful that some of the oppressed peoples of the earth will become discontented and desire to live under a government to which they consent, the President speaks with power and passion of the mission of America to assist just such weak and oppressed peoples.

“If you could catch some of these voices that speak of the utter longing of the oppressed and helpless peoples all over the world,” he says on May 18, 1918, “and hear something like the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic,’ hear the feet of the great hosts of liberty going to set them free, to set their minds free, to set their children free, then you would know what comes into the hearts of those who are trying to contribute all the brains and power they have to this great enterprise of liberty.”

There were also groups of Americans, with their leadership in the Senate, who were bitterly opposed to the second principle, the League of Nations. They were against assuming international obligations, or taking any essential part in a new world association. They represented a kind of State rights party in international affairs; they were jealous of American rights, fearful of even a hint of a new world federation. In response to these elements of opposition who believed still in an isolated

America, an America devoted to its own selfish development, the President set forth an ardent vision of America as a powerful State committed, not to its own aggrandizement, but to the service of the world. Here he rose to his greatest heights of prophetic eloquence. The vision he had of America was a world away from the German idea of a State seeking only its own safety and its own welfare. It was a vision of great States, like the greatest men, seeking not their own ends, but serving humanity, and of a new order of international relationships founded upon this spirit.

We may say his vision was unwarranted, "impractical," that it did not take sufficient account of the new economic problems crowding upon the world, yet there it was, a part of the moving spirit of the time, and it must be given its full value by the historian as a profound element in shaping the course of America at Paris.

Foreign writers have seemed to grasp more clearly the true nature and significance of the President's vision than many of his own countrymen; to perceive what it means in the world, how it will inspire or plague future generations. Says a writer in the *Hibbert Journal* (Professor L. P. Jacks of Oxford University):

The germinating idea of Mr. Wilson's policy is that America, because of her greatness, of her power, of her vast potentialities, is a servant among the nations, not a master. It is a noble conception and peculiarly fitted to inspire a young and mighty people with a vision of its destiny, and so to mark out for it in the centuries that are to come a line of development different from and, I think, higher than any which the older States of the world have so far pursued. Though the idea of greatness in service has been long familiar in other connections, where perhaps it had received more lip service than loyalty, President Wilson is the first statesman to make it operative or to endeavour to make it operative as a guiding principle of

international polities, and this alone, whether he succeeds or not, assures him a distinct place in history and in the grateful remembrance of mankind. Needless to say, this idea—that the greatest nation must needs be a servant nation—stands out as the polar opposite to the notion of national greatness which prevails with the rulers and apparently with the people of Germany; and a prescient mind, on hearing it first announced by Mr. Wilson in the early stages of the war, might have predicted that a moment would come when the two opposites, driven by a dramatic or moral necessity, would break out into open conflict with one another.

In short, the President applied to the relationships of nations the highest principles of morality—Christian morality—accepted as governing the actions of individuals. “Whoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all.” He thought of America not in terms of great political power, nor of great wealth, nor of vast trade, but in terms of moral leadership and of international service.

Again and again, both before the war, after it began, and during the Peace Conference, the President reiterated these ideas.

“America was created to unite mankind.” America is to “think first of humanity.”

A month before the great war broke out, July 4, 1914, the President prophetically spoke of his vision of America as a world leader:

My dream is that as the years go by and the world knows more and more of America it . . . will turn to America for those moral inspirations which lie at the basis of all freedom; that the world will never fear America unless it feels that it is engaged in some enterprise which is inconsistent with the rights of humanity: and that America will come into the full light of the day when all shall know that she puts human rights above all other rights, and that her flag is the flag not only of America, but of humanity. What other great people has devoted itself to this exalted ideal?

In his speech of April 2, 1917, just before the American declaration of war, he said:

We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.

During the ordeal of the war and the even greater ordeal of the Peace Conference it was with the thought of the great American statesmen who founded the nation and of the principles they enunciated that he constantly fortified his spirit. As he said in one of his speeches during the arduous Western trip in September, 1919—his final hopeless appeal to the people—just before his breakdown:

I can fancy those men of the first generation that so thoughtfully set up this great Government, the generation of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, and the Adamses—I can fancy their looking on with a sort of enraptured amazement that the American spirit should make a conquest of the world.

If he had felt the problems of the peace, as he must have felt them there on the ship, as merely his own he must have been utterly daunted, but he felt them as America's and he felt America behind him.

He had also another strong warrant for his confidence. This lay in the almost universal acceptance of the American principles by the nations of the world, especially by the liberal and labour groups of the allied nations. They were agreed to, signed and sealed, at the Armistice.

Such a mighty hold, indeed, had the American idea taken upon the world that it became the best of politics for the statesmen of the allied nations to play. Lloyd

George's statement of war aims in January, 1918, significantly before the Trade Union Conference in London, contains many of the same proposals for specific settlements as those laid down by President Wilson in his earlier addresses. With characteristic ardour Lloyd George not only accepts what he perceives to be the winning keynote of the coming settlements, self-determination, but impulsively rides the logic of the principle into jungles where the President never ventured. He declares in his speech to the workers that "the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war," and then asserts that even the African natives of the German colonies are competent to decide their own political fate.

One of the interesting figures at Paris, a gentleman and a scholar, though not a strong leader, was Orlando, Premier of Italy. No man there better understood the President's real message—though he was later to oppose bitterly the President's programme. In November, 1918, two months before the Peace Conference, in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies at Rome, he thus set forth the position of the United States, as he understood it:

This problem is not so much that of finding a new form of social life such as will assure the peaceable adjustment of every future difficulty, but that of feeling and living up to this specific truth: that in the ethical world, power is not the spring of greater rights but of wider responsibilities and therefore of greater duties. In recognition of this President Wilson checkmated the imperialistic German theory of the right of might by the principle of the duty of the strongest, giving to such principle its noblest expression by placing the authority of the moral law above the might of the United States.

It was this thought of a great nation, the most powerful in the whole world, acting in the service of humanity, to protect the weak, to raise up the oppressed

and downtrodden, to bring justice into the world—it was this that raised those mighty shouting crowds in Rome and Paris and London. It was this that, as Count Czernin said, “opened up a world of hope” to a world of misery.

Even M. Clemenceau recognized this change in attitude during the progress of the war toward a more idealistic position. He said in response to the President on May 26:

What President Wilson had said about the change of mind of the peoples of the world which had occurred during the war was a very serious consideration. In the earlier part of the war, people had talked about seizure of territory but, afterwards had come the idea of the liberties of peoples and the building up of new relations.<sup>1</sup>

In short, these ideas, this body of moral principles, represented not only the deep-seated aspirations and convictions of the President, or of Americans, but they also represented, as the European political leaders well knew, the aspirations and convictions of the masses of the peoples of all countries.

The League of Nations was a logical consequence of the President's idea of service as a national duty. The nations of the world should be bound together in a spirit of service to each other—service of the great to the small, of the rich to the undeveloped, service of those experienced in freedom to the politically backward. If autocracy was to be overthrown and many new and weak democracies were to come into being, it was necessary that there should be a strong league of nations not only to prevent future war but to protect these new nations until they could establish themselves firmly.

It is significant that of all the allied leaders, no matter how nobly they had borne the great burdens of the war,

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four.

it was Wilson who evoked the great popular receptions—unparalleled receptions—in the capitals of Europe. There was never a parade for Clemenceau; Lloyd George slipped in and out of Paris almost unheralded; Orlando and Sonnino came and went, indeed, like great ambassadors, but with no popular acclaim. I suppose there was never anything like the feeling aroused by Wilson among the people of Europe, and this is to be set down here as a historical fact, whatever may be the judgment of subsequent events.

“The President’s principles,” remarks the cautious writer of the Institute of International Affairs, “had conquered Europe,” and asks as a kind of after-thought: “What still remains to be seen is . . . whether the Wilsonian principles can conquer America.”<sup>1</sup>

Of course, these great principles were set forth to the world, and accepted by the world, in a highly emotional moment of common fear and common suffering. How the ideas fared when the emotional moment passed, when the pressing needs and ambitions and vast economic problems were insistently brought before the harassed delegates at Paris, remains yet to be considered. It is the story of the Peace Conference.

On December 13 the *George Washington* arrived in Brest, and on the 14th the President rode down the Champs Élysées with the President of France—a popular reception of vast proportions. “Vive l’Amerique,” “Vive le President,” cried the multitude. Over the street where the procession passed hung a great banner bearing the words, “Honour to Wilson the Just.”

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<sup>1</sup>“A History of the Peace Conference of Paris,” edited by H. W. V. Temperley, Vol. I, p. 204.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD DIPLOMACY AND WHAT IT STOOD FOR—THE EUROPEAN SECRET TREATIES AND THEIR EFFECT UPON THE PEACE CONFERENCE—ATTITUDE OF AMERICA TOWARD SECRET DIPLOMACY

THE President was in France. He had already ridden down the Champs Élysées and up the boulevards in a blaze of glory. His reception had been unexampled. He had come with American idées and American principles, and he was face to face at last with the Old World, the problems of the Old World, the politicians of the Old World, the diplomacy of the Old World, and finally with the economic problems of the Old World, the importance of which few Americans at that time realized.

I have shown in the last chapter what the American programme was as set forth by the President. I have shown how powerful was his faith in it and the determination to use it in creating a “new order.”

It remains now, before exhibiting the actual struggle there by the Seine, or on the stony hill of Paris where the President lived, to show what the Old World stood for, in terms of diplomacy and politics. Before we can understand this “War of the Peace,” we must see and be sure not to underrate the forces of the opposition. After all, there was a past, there were ancient traditions; other nations in the world also had their desires, needs, ambitions—facts the American is likely to forget.

If the President during more than two years had been

gradually building up, speech by speech, in messages to Congress, in correspondence with foreign powers—all in the free public air, wide open to the world and known to every American soldier—a solid and stately structure of principles which represented the American attitude toward the coming peace, so also had the nations of Europe and Asia been working out their conceptions of the coming settlements, also in notes, “conversations,” treaties. Much of this had been done before America entered the war, and practically all in the dark in the form of “secret treaties”—arrangements between diplomats, which were withheld from the people who were doing the actual fighting. It was probably inevitable that this should have been so, because the Old World was struggling in the mazes of an antiquated system which no one nation, even with the best intent, could have broken down. Nevertheless, President Wilson’s absolutely frank pronouncements, with no purposes anywhere concealed, represented the “new diplomacy,” or “open diplomacy,” and these secret treaties of 1915, 1916, 1917 represented the “old diplomacy” upon which rested, as upon a rock, the Old World imperialistic and militaristic system.

It may be said that the Governments of the allied nations, after America came in, accepted the American ideas. It is true, they did: they agreed solemnly to the President’s principles at the Armistice. The great liberal and labour groups were everywhere with him, and there were leaders even in the Governments, especially in Great Britain, who endeavoured earnestly to stand by. But when the Peace Conference began, the same elements in each nation, often the same leaders, who had made those secret treaties were still in power. Not only did most of them know and believe in that method of diplomacy—some of them had been schooled in it all their

lives—not only were they committed to the full use of the military method, which they also understood perfectly, but far more fundamental than either, these secret treaties represented the real views, the real desires, the real necessities of the various Governments. For what a man or nation desires secretly is the reality; what he says is the appearance.

Suffice it to say that though conditions had radically changed in the course of the war, though America had come in and American principles had been universally accepted, though Russia had disappeared as a factor in the settlement, though Austria-Hungary had entirely broken up (an event predicted by no responsible statesman in the early days of the war, although Lloyd George had called it, in 1914, a “ramshackle empire”), even though the secret treaties had been in some instances disclaimed, yet the demands set forth during the Peace Conference by the various nations were (as will be shown) exactly the claims made in those very secret treaties.

If we can understand then as a foundation what was in these old secret treaties the entire stage of the drama at Paris will be powerfully illuminated.

It is truly an amazing thing that in all the records of the Peace Conference so far written no complete or adequate account of these secret arrangements, and no proper estimate of their influence upon the councils, has been given. This is due to several causes. In the first place, the secret records of the Peace Conference—in which all the more important of these treaties are discussed—have not hitherto been accessible, and it was impossible for the writers to know how many days and pages were devoted to the endless controversies which raged around them. In the second place, some of the writers who well knew of the existence of certain of these

secret arrangements are content to maintain that secrecy—such shreds of it as are left—and minimize their warping influence upon the Conference. One may read M. André Tardieu's bulky volume, which he calls "The Truth about the Treaty," without discovering that there was ever such a thing as a secret treaty!

But without an understanding of these treaties there can be no true understanding of what really happened at Paris. Two of the great conflicts there, the Italian and Japanese settlements, turned largely upon the existence of secret treaties, and the black trail of the serpent of secret diplomacy of the earlier days of the war also disfigured the discussions of the disposition of the German colonies and the settlements in Turkey and played a part in nearly every other important controversy.

It was the most insidious single element working against full publicity of the proceedings, for it involved purposes which the European Powers dared not discuss in public. It cramped and hampered the experts, it caused the chief European councillors themselves to play fast and loose with one another. Nothing in the voluminous records of the Council of Ten and Council of Four at Paris is more impressive than the amount of time—invaluable time, priceless energy—devoted to trying to devise methods of getting around or over or through these old secret entanglements. There, and not in discussions of the League of Nations, was where the time was lost.

It would be impossible, for example, to understand the situation under which such small nations as Serbia and Rumania came into the Conference, and the attitude, the duplicities, of the great Powers toward them, without knowing fully of the existence of the secret treaty with Rumania and of the manner in which it had been

concealed even from Serbia, an ally then fighting to the limit of its ability against the Central Empires, and whose interests were directly affected by that treaty. Consider this colloquy, exhibiting one of the most shameless acts of the entire war, which took place in the Council of Ten soon after the Conference opened:

M. VESNITCII [the Serbian delegate], stated that he . . . had heard, with regret, that the Rumanian delegation based their country's claim in part on the secret treaty of 1916. When this treaty was being negotiated, Serbia was fighting on the side of the Allies, without asking for any assurances, in the firm belief that after the war settlement would be made on the principles of justice, on the principles of the self-determination of nationalities and in accordance with the promises of the Allies. . . .

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he was not aware that the treaty of 1916 had been secret.

M. VESNITCII replied that not only had the treaty never been published, but that as a representative of a power fighting with the Allies, he had several times asked here in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to know terms of the treaty. He had been told that the contents of the treaty could not be divulged.

M. BRATIANO [the Rumanian delegate] stated that the discussion of the claims of Rumania had been begun in London in 1916, and had then been transferred to Petrograd, as a place where the examination of Eastern questions could be more conveniently carried on, especially in regard to Serbia.

M. PICHON [the French Minister of Foreign Affairs] then read the last paragraph of the Treaty, which required the maintenance of its secrecy to the end of the war.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen from this conversation what an atmosphere of distrust these secret treaties had produced at Paris. Such stories as this, bruited about, infected all the small nations with cynical suspicion. Who knew what other secret treaties existed, or had been made

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 31.

behind their backs? Who knew that secret treaties were not still being made? Not only did the small nations suspect the great Allies, but the great Allies, I shall show, suspected one another.

It was in this atmosphere that President Wilson came, asking the nations to trust one another, to have faith in one another. For the basis of the old diplomacy was suspicion, the basis of the new, if ever there is to be a new, must be mutual trust; and that trust among nations, as among individual men, must rest upon truth-telling, frankness, openness of purpose.

It may truthfully be said—the documents abundantly prove it—that this secret diplomacy not only cursed Europe during the old armed peace, but nearly lost the great war to the Allies.

For it produced in each allied nation, but especially in Great Britain and Italy, profound internal discontent and distrust on the part of the labour and liberal groups. It must not be forgotten that the great war broke upon a world very different, indeed, from that, say, of Napoleon, with a working class better educated, better organized, more self-conscious, than ever before—a working class that in all the belligerent countries had the power of the ballot. So powerful had these groups grown in 1914 that in several countries they were seizing political power, or else, as in Russia, were close to revolution. They were against the entire old system of militarism and of diplomacy. They wanted, as President Wilson did, a “new order,” a “new world,” although they defined their “new order” in different terms with an economic programme far beyond anything visualized by the President.

When the great war came, all class controversies and labour unrest were quickly forgotten in a stern uprising

to repel the invader. For the Prussian Monarchy symbolized all they hated.

But this complete unity lasted for only a short time in any European country. The powerful labour and socialistic groups began again to be restive. They had ancient knowledge—and fear—of the old diplomacy, and they were profoundly suspicious of their Governments. Even before it was known that any secret treaties existed, these opposition groups suspected that their Governments were concerned not only with the defense of the allied nations from German aggression, but with territorial expansions and extensions of their own nationalistic power. And they soon began to have confirmation of their suspicions.

On April 26, 1915, nine months after the war began, the secret treaty of London, which brought Italy into the war, was signed. While the liberals of Europe knew in part the promises the Allies had made to Italy (had had to make!) they also knew the danger that lurked in such annexationist commitments. They knew also that other secret arrangements were being made among the Allies, a hint of that with Russia regarding Constantinople, and certainly of that of August, 1916, which brought Rumania into the war, but they were never sure that they knew all the terms of these agreements, and they shrewdly suspected (rightly enough as we know now) that there were still other agreements of which they knew nothing whatever. On one hand this secrecy caused the opposition groups to exaggerate the extent of the arrangements among the Allies, and on the other it estopped responsible statesmen like Asquith and Grey from explaining why the Allies had been forced to make promises, for example, to Italy and Rumania, in order to get them into the war on the side of the Allies. And

no doubt, though their fear of the secret treaties was real enough, these radical groups used them also as a weapon in their general campaign of opposition to the Governments in power.

Italian opinion, for example, was by no means undivided at the time regarding the secret treaty of London, which gave to Italy such important accessions of territory. For in Italy, as in other allied countries, there were powerful labour and liberal groups, and these elements vigorously endeavoured to secure a revision of the imperialistic purposes of the treaty. When in Italy in 1918 I found this movement much in evidence, supported by such powerful progressive newspapers as the *Corriera della Sera* and the *Secolo* of Milan; and, of course, by the labour and socialist leaders. Even Signor Orlando himself was at that time a vigorous critic of the treaty. They took the ground that the treaty was a mistake for Italy itself, and that the best policy in the long run was not to try to annex territory or population at the expense of the nations to the east and thus make enemies of them, but to coöperate with them and win their friendship.

In pursuance of this far-sighted liberal policy there was held at Rome in April, 1918, a Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary, and an attempt was made to offset the bad impression produced in the Balkans by the London treaty. But after the Italian victories of the following fall the effort to revise the treaty was given up, and Italy came into the Peace Conference demanding not only all that was in the secret treaty of London, but also the City of Fiume, which, under that treaty, was assigned to the Croatians. The effects of this secret treaty upon the Peace Conference, which were profound, will be treated in their proper place.

In December, 1916, after the German proposals of peace to America and the Pope, President Wilson himself, impressed by the want of a clear statement of real war aims and disturbed by the reports of secret arrangements, requested the belligerents to set forth in detail their conditions of peace. On January 10, 1917 (three months before America declared war), came the first comprehensive statement of the Allies. Read in the light of later knowledge this statement is extremely vague, and either avoids or conceals in generalities many of the real and specific purposes to which the Allies had solemnly agreed among themselves in the secret treaties. But it was a decided advance in definiteness upon any former declaration (and much franker than the German reply), and it declared for the two great general principles in which President Wilson was chiefly interested: strongly for the League of Nations and less clearly for "self-determination."

In April America came into the war, giving still greater reality to Mr. Wilson's powerful effort to define anew and in constructive terms—to give a high moral significance—to the war aims of the Allies.

But the doubts and suspicions of the opposition were quieted only for a brief time. New evidence kept dribbling out—often by way of the enemy countries—that their governments were not being frank with them; that the purposes of the secret treaties had not really been abandoned when the new statement of war aims was made, and that there were other secret arrangements, of which they knew nothing at all. For example, the old Russian Government, just before it fell (in March, 1917) and in a last desperate effort to reinspire support among its people (though it had precisely the contrary effect), published the fact that the Allies had secretly

promised to give Constantinople to Russia as spoils of war.'

It is still difficult for Americans to realize the seriousness with which these things were regarded in Europe.

In America we knew little and cared less about these European secret treaties. Our national interests were at no point directly affected by them; and we had no powerful body of liberal or radical opinion, as in England, to agitate regarding them.<sup>1</sup> Everyone knew, indeed, that Italy had driven a hard bargain when she came into the war on the side of the Allies—but this was war, and in war anything may be necessary. But the importance of this particular secret treaty—the treaty of London—when the time should come for peace-making was never visualized in America, not even by President Wilson; and little was known up to the time of the Peace Conference, except by a small number of students of international affairs—and even then by no means fully—about the amazing tangle of other secret treaties and arrangements in which the nations of Europe had, because of necessity, fear, or greed, become involved. This indifference was a symbol of our national isolation.

Even the State Department of the United States, which is the organization especially charged with the duty of knowing about foreign affairs, seems to have had no interest in these secret treaties and, if Secretary Lansing is to be believed, little or no knowledge of them. One

<sup>1</sup> Earnest attempts were indeed made in America by a small group of radicals in New York to give publicity to such of these secret treaties as were published by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917. They were published in the New York *Evening Post*, and in part in six other newspapers out of the thousands in America, and copies were sent to Members of Congress: but with little or no effect. Not only was their serious significance not popularly appreciated, but the war-spirit was then running at fever-heat and there was a widespread feeling, expressed, for example, by the New York *Nation* of August 3, 1918, that "as to the secret treaties . . . their disclosure weakened the morale and prestige of the Allies, and the treaties were very properly brushed aside by President Wilson."

is dumbfounded to read his testimony before the Senate Committee, August 6, 1919 (p. 190):

SENATOR JOHNSON of California—Were you familiar with the treaties that had been made after the commencement of the war concerning the disposition of territory by the different belligerents?

SECRETARY LANSING—I was more familiar with the London agreement that affected the Italian boundaries, than any other.

SENATOR JOHNSON—Were you familiar with any other agreements between—

SECRETARY LANSING—No.

SENATOR JOHNSON—Did you know that any such existed?

SECRETARY LANSING—No.

SENATOR JOHNSON—You do not know whether there were any treaties made during the war or not?

SECRETARY LANSING—No; because I never paid any attention to that.

The Secretary could have obtained information on the subject easily enough, but shared the general American attitude toward it. We know that he once discussed the secret agreements involving Japan with the experts of the Inquiry. A note made by him upon a cablegram from Colonel House, dated November 15, 1918, shows that he knew something of these treaties at least. Worst of all is the failure to take any action upon the cable referred to, in which the French Foreign Office threw out a momentary suggestion of willingness to scrap all the secret treaties for the sake of curbing Italy. Here was an opportunity neglected through failure to appreciate its importance.

While the President must have known in general of these secret agreements, for he often excoriated the practices of "secret diplomacy," he apparently made no attempt to secure any vital or comprehensive knowledge. Of all his associates, Colonel House, head of the Inquiry, was prob-

ably the best informed. When Mr. Balfour came to Washington as the British commissioner, in April, 1917, he explained certain of these treaties to Colonel House. Colonel House, however, said he was not particularly interested, because it seemed to him more important to bend all energies to the winning of the war, and he finally told Mr. Balfour that they were "dividing the bearskin before the bear had been killed." Mr. Balfour, so far as the writer knows, did not reopen the subject with our Government, while Colonel House apparently let it drop without reference to the President. The President's advisers thus underestimated the importance of the whole matter and felt that to waste any time on it would only interfere with the energetic prosecution of the war, which they believed was the most important consideration of the moment. They trusted, as did the whole country, that all would come right in the end once we had "licked the Kaiser."

Nor was any real conception of these commitments, or of their importance in a dim future peace conference, to be gleaned from the reports of our Ambassadors abroad. Their occasional references to the diplomatic dealings of the Allies among themselves convey only the sketchiest and most distorted impressions of the state of affairs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Following is a report from Ambassador Sharp at Paris relating to the arrangements in Asia Minor:

Green

Paris

Dated August 2, 1917.

Recd. August 3, 2:30 p. m.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Washington, D. C.

Confidential. 2353 August 2, 7 p. m.

Your telegram No. 2501, July 31, 4 p. m. In a talk with Mr. Cambon this morning I learned of a most interesting and rather complicated situation as it bears upon the question of allied future interest in Asia Minor. It develops that prior to the entrance of Italy into the war England, France, and Russia had entered into an alliance or at least had an understanding as to their respective interests in that country. The interests and aims of England in the Valley of the Euphrates were tentatively defined, also those of Russia in Armenia, and those of France in Syria where she has valuable

Evidently little information was freely given them; and their unskillful inquiries elicited evasive replies which their own absence of background prevented them from interpreting in any true light. Their reports, consequently, mean almost nothing by themselves. The profoundly important fact is that, among all the papers Mr. Wilson has so carefully preserved, there is no document giving any definite or comprehensive information concerning the secret treaties.

We find the President answering the questions of the Senators at the White House conference, August 19, 1919, as follows:

SENATOR BORAH— . . . When did the secret treaties between Great Britain, France, and the other nations of Europe with reference

properties and many people of French nationality or allegiance. Besides she had in a way for several centuries protected Christianity in that country. This agreement naturally was based upon the collapse and practical dissipation of Turkish dominion in the countries named. Mr. Cambon, however, expressed it as his belief that England and France would not feel willing now to support Russia in her control of affairs, stating that that country ought to be autonomous and free from outside control.

When, however, Italy joined the Allies she at once manifested a desire to assert her rights in the participation of a future exercise of power and possible acquisition of territory in the eastern Mediterranean which has not been well received by either France or England. As a matter of fact, Sonnino, the Italian Premier, has been in London since the adjournment of the conference here last week in consultation with Lloyd George on these questions as they affect these different interests in Asia Minor and surrounding territory. Mr. Cambon said that Sonnino was pressing Italy's claims very persistently but that he thought that it was too early to enter into a definite agreement and I inferred that he also voiced the views of England in expressing that opinion. I have gathered from time to time that the contentions of Italy have been a bone of contention to harmonious action with the other allied powers and Mr. Cambon made no concealment of the fact that Serbia had previously cause for concern and dissatisfaction on account of the ambitions of Italy as briefly referred to in my number 2321, second edition, July twenty-fourth. The subject mentioned in Mr. Cambon's third question and to which your telegram number 2501 refers, has to do with the situation which I have thus briefly set forth.

Mr. Cambon added that naturally the questions were submitted to our Government in order that it might be made [omission in cablegram] the questions which confronted the allied powers for solution sooner or later. As I have stated in my number 2352 August 2, 8 p. m. Mr. Cambon frankly said to me that on account of the enormous nature of one or two of these subjects of contention he was really glad that our Government was not represented at the Conference.

SHARP.

to certain adjustments in Europe first come to your knowledge? Was that after you reached Paris also?

THE PRESIDENT—Yes, the whole series of understandings were disclosed to me for the first time then.

SENATOR BORAH—Then we had no knowledge of these secret treaties, so far as our Government was concerned, until you reached Paris?

THE PRESIDENT—Not unless there was information at the State Department of which I knew nothing.

It is easy, of course, after the event, to excoriate this American ignorance, and the failure to "pay any attention" to such vital diplomatic matters. It is indeed inexcusable, and yet there are mitigating circumstances. America has never had a thoroughly trained, well-paid professional diplomatic service in any way equal to that of the European nations. Its State Department, while sometimes having brilliant Secretaries, has, in its under personnel, been inadequate and inefficient. Its great Ambassadorial offices in Europe during the mightiest war in history were mostly held by political appointees, a few of them able men, but wholly without training or special knowledge of foreign affairs. There was no adequate intelligence service. This state of affairs was not Democratic nor Republican—it was American. A Democratic Administration turns out Republicans who have begun to get a little knowledge and puts in Democrats; a Republican Administration follows and does exactly the same thing. The result is that American amateurs are always meeting European or Asiatic professionals. Our diplomatic service is, therefore, not only unskillful in method, but lacking in comprehension of its tasks. It possesses little stored-up knowledge of the aims and policies, jealousies and intrigues inherent in European diplomacy. Straws which reveal whole winds of international policy

to the trained observers in European chancelleries appear to it as straws and nothing more—to be brushed aside as unimportant.

If our diplomatic service lacked a background of comprehension of the significance of the secret treaties, what shall be said of our public opinion? Venturing into a totally unfamiliar sea, driven blindly by a blast of war feeling, a few leaves of secret engagements in the wind meant absolutely nothing to it. They were easily dismissed as "propaganda"—whether German or Russian.

So far as the President was concerned, he considered that the full acceptance of his programme of settlement by all the Allies at the Armistice, the first point of which dealt with secret diplomacy, assured a discussion at the Peace Conference of every question upon its merits, not upon former secret arrangements. The nations had promised and, as he told the joint session of Congress, November 11, 1918, he believed that they would do what they said they would. This may have been an unwarranted confidence, but the President entertained it, and throughout the Conference refused to accept secret treaties as a basis of settlement of any question.

As he said in discussing the demands of Italy:

He did not know and did not feel at liberty to ask whether France and Great Britain considered the treaty [the secret Treaty of London] as consistent with the principles on which the Peace Treaty was being based. He was at liberty to say, however, that he himself did not. To discuss the matter on the basis of the Pact of London would be to adopt as a basis a secret treaty. Yet he would be bound to say to the world that we were establishing a new order in which secret treaties were precluded. . . . The Pact of London was inconsistent with the general principles of the settlement. He knew perfectly well that the Pact of London had been entered into in quite different circumstances, and he did not wish to criticise what had been done. But to suggest that the decision should be taken on the

basis of the Treaty of London would draw the United States of America into an impossible situation.<sup>1</sup>

After the pronouncement of war aims made by the allied leaders in January, 1917, the suspicion of the opposition groups in the allied countries, which had been temporarily allayed, began soon to increase again—and at the same time the fortunes of the Allies in the war began to look doubtful, if not desperate.

In March of that year (1917) the old Russian Government crumbled into dissolution, the Tsar fled, and one of the early acts of the Revolutionary Government (not yet the Bolsheviks) was to set forth a programme (April 10) that not only proposed a peace almost exactly like that of President Wilson, but by implication abandoned all the Russian claims under the secret treaties. But when the Bolsheviks later came into power (November 6, 1917) they went still a step further—a devastating step. They not only declared general principles, they not only denounced the secret treaties by implication, but they published them. And nothing in the world is so awkward and absurd as a published secret treaty. They opened up to the daylight of the whole world the musty secret archives of the old Russian Government.

Never was there such an example of the sheer power of publicity. The embarrassing texts of the secret treaties (known up to that time) were printed by M. Trotzky, the Bolshevik Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, in *Isvestiya*, the official organ of the Soviets, in November, 1917, and they enabled him to make a point in his introductory manifesto which appealed strongly to the parties of the Left in all countries, that "the people should have

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 19.

the documentary truth about those plots which were hatched in secret by financiers and industrials, together with their parliamentary and diplomatic agents."

Though this publication was attacked and everywhere minimized at the time as being mere "Bolshevist propaganda," yet later events, especially in the Peace Conference, showed that they had printed the truth.

While the text of the secret treaties was published by the Bolsheviks on November 17, 1917, copies of the *Iswestiya* containing them did not reach western Europe for some weeks, although intimations of what these treaties contained began to filter through at once, and to cause much excitement among the opposition forces in all of the allied Governments.

More important still, perhaps, was the undoubtedly commotion caused by this wholly unexpected publication of their secret arrangements in the Foreign Offices of Great Britain, France, and Italy, and the effect of the extraordinary demands by the Russians at Brest-Litovsk that "no secret diplomacy" should be the cornerstone of the peace negotiations with the Germans.

The Government leaders in allied countries knew that the facts, published in Russia, would soon be known in detail all over Europe and might not only produce an ill effect upon the already restive groups of the opposition in allied countries, but arouse suspicion and doubt in America, and further kindle the war spirit in Germany. Without question this was the chief reason why Lloyd George began immediately to try to satisfy labour—and America—with a more advanced and idealistic statement of allied war aims.

We find among the President's papers the following remarkably revealing cablegram, dated January 5, from Mr. Balfour, then British Minister for Foreign Affairs

sent to the American State Department for communication to the President:

Following for information of the President, private and secret:—

Negotiations have been going on for some time between the Prime Minister and the Trades Unions. The main point was the desire of the Government to be released from certain pledges which were made to the labour leaders earlier in the war. This release is absolutely indispensable from the military point of view for the development of man power on the western front. Finally the negotiations arrived at a point at which their successful issue depended mainly on the immediate publication by the British Government of a statement setting forth their war aims. This statement has now been made by the Prime Minister. It is the result of consultations with the labour leaders as well as the leaders of the Parliamentary opposition.

Under these circumstances there was no time to consult the Allies as to the terms of the statement agreed on by the Prime Minister and the above mentioned persons. It will be found on examination to be in accordance with the declarations hitherto made by the President on this subject.

Should the President himself make a statement of his own views which in view of the appeal made to the peoples of the world by the Bolsheviks might appear a desirable course, the Prime Minister is confident that such a statement would also be in general accordance with the lines of the President's previous speeches, which in England as well as in other countries have been so warmly received by public opinion. Such a further statement would naturally receive an equally warm welcome.

On the very day of this Balfour cablegram for the President, January 5, 1918, Lloyd George made his great war-aims speech, significantly before the Trade Union Congress in London, in which he practically adopted the principles which President Wilson had long been advocating. He seized with consummate political prescience, as he had so often done in his career, upon the group of ideas which he saw rapidly rising to effective power in the world. He wanted above everything to

conciliate and satisfy labour. In this speech he made a specific disavowal of the imperialistic aims of the Allies as disclosed in certain of the secret treaties, especially those relating to Turkey. He said that the subject lands of Turkey were entitled to "a recognition of their separate national conditions" and that the previous [secret] agreements were not to prevent a free discussion among the Allies as to their future, because the Russian collapse had changed all the conditions. His reference to Turkey shrewdly did two things: it reassured labour and it reassured the disturbed Moslems of India, where the British were then trying to whip up recruiting. But, as we know now, he made no disavowal of other secret treaties such as those with Japan regarding Shantung and the Pacific islands, which caused such great trouble later at Paris (which were not published by the Bolsheviks and apparently were not known to them).

The first and one of the very few newspapers in Great Britain to publish translations of such of these secret treaties as the Bolsheviks had made public was the *Manchester Guardian* (December 12, 1917), and in February, 1918, they were issued in a little pamphlet by the National Labour Press of Manchester, with maps showing what the treaties meant. But the other newspapers in Great Britain, France, Italy, and America, with a few exceptions, completely ignored them. Of course, there was a reason for this, which the historian of these events, who is trying to set down what really happened, need no longer observe, and that was the fact that the war at the time was in a critical stage, and the disclosure of the existence of these treaties was disturbing, and tended to raise voices of doubt and opposition.

Although the great speeches of Lloyd George and of President Wilson (the Fourteen Points Speech) were

made in January, 1918, and terms of peace on a new basis seemed assured—for the whole world rose in approval—yet these voices of skepticism and doubt were not entirely stilled. The opposition groups were still worried about the secret treaties, still suspicious of their own Governments, and at the same time growing desperately war-weary.

Nothing was more surprising and inexplicable at first to the American observer who went to Europe during the crisis of the war, in 1918, as I did, than the discovery of the extent and seriousness of this suspicion and discontent.

On May 11, 1918, *The Herald* of London, the chief labour journal of Great Britain, published all these treaties in full, also with maps and the following introduction:

We are concentrating this week on the secret treaties because we believe it absolutely and immediately necessary to give these terms of Great Britain's concealed aims and commitments the widest possible publicity. The press with a few shining exceptions, . . . has ignored the terms of the treaties made public by the Bolsheviks, and the majority of people still receive the mention of the "secret treaties" with a stare of blank incomprehension. In a country boasting itself a democracy, and claiming to be fighting for democratic ends, this state of things is as absurd as it is dangerous.

But this publication of the text of the treaties was not all, for *The Herald* set forth in parallel columns a series of comparisons of the war aims, as stated publicly by various responsible spokesmen of the allied countries, with the secret purposes set forth in the treaties. In order to show how these things appeared to the opposition parties in the allied countries, samples of these comparisons may here be set down:



Robert Lansing, Secretary of State and Member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace



## NO TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS

## PROFESSION

"We are not fighting for additional territory."—Mr. Bonar Law, House of Commons, Feb. 20, 1917.

## PRACTICE

"In the Spring of 1916 the allied British, French and Russian Governments came to an agreement as regards the future delimitation of their respective zones of influence and territorial acquisitions in Asiatic Turkey. . . .

"Great Britain obtains the southern part of Mesopotamia, with Bagdad, and stipulates for herself in Syria the ports of Haifa and Akka."—Russian Foreign Office memorandum, March 6, 1917.

## FREEDOM OF SMALL STATES

## PROFESSION

"This is a war . . . for the emancipation of the smaller States."—Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, Guildhall, Nov. 9, 1916.

"The sympathy with which his Majesty's Government regard the legitimate aspirations of the Albanian people . . . ."—Foreign Office letter to Miss Durham, Jan. 16, 1918.

## PRACTICE

"The neutral zone in Persia is to be included in the English sphere of influence . . . ."—Russo-British agreement, March 20, 1916.

"Having obtained . . . the Gulf of Valona, Italy undertakes . . . not to oppose the possible desire of France, Great Britain and Russia to repartition the northern and southern districts of Albania between Montenegro, Serbia and Greece."—Treaty with Italy, April 28, 1915.

Nor must it be forgotten that similar publications were eagerly being made in Germany and Austria and that in these countries the designs of the Allies as disclosed by the secret treaties had a profound effect in strengthening the influence of the war party. They seemed to prove the case of the war lords. For the

German leaders, hard driven to keep up popular morale, could say to their war-weary people, "You see what the Allies are really fighting for: they are fighting to dismember Germany and Austria and Turkey and to seize territory for themselves in every part of the world."

Nor is there any doubt that the discovery by the Croats and Slovenes who had never been entirely loyal to Austria, that the Allies had secretly promised to give to Rumania parts of the Banat occupied wholly by Slavic people and to Italy the Dalmatian coast, set the Slavs who were still under the Austrian Empire to fighting again with new vigour for the Central Powers.

"If such are the cynical purposes of the Allies," these small nations were tempted to ask—as they did ask afterward at Paris—"why are we better off with the Allies than with the Central Powers?"

If it had not been for the powerful expression by President Wilson of the new ideas of settlement at this critical time and the eager acceptance of his leadership so far as the peace programme was concerned, by the allied Powers, the effect of these publications would undoubtedly have been far worse than it was—and might easily have been fatal. It was well known that America was bound in no way by any of these agreements and that the President was outspoken in his denunciations of these very practices of the old diplomacy. It was well known also that America had no secret or special interests to serve. Moreover, the President had far-sightedly endeavoured to meet this very situation. He had insisted all along that we were not an "allied" but an "associated" Power; he wished thus to make it clear that we were not bound by any previous action of the European Allies, that we preserved our own freedom and independence in every future decision. In his very

first reference to the secret treaties at the Peace Conference he lays down his position clearly:

As the United States of America were not bound by any of the [secret] treaties in question they are quite ready to approve a settlement on a basis of facts.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did the President stop with a single announcement of his peace programme. If the skepticism of the opposition in Europe continued after the great announcements of January, 1918, so did the President's reiterations, even more emphatic and persuasive, of the new basis of the peace. On February 11, 1918, he developed his principles in Congress; in March (11) he sent his message to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets (this was the revolutionary, but not yet the Bolshevik, Government) in which he tells them that "the whole heart of the people of the United States is with the people of Russia in the attempt to free themselves forever from autocratic government and become the masters of their own life." On July 4, at Mount Vernon, he made a still more powerful statement of his progressive principles and laid down the four points of settlement.<sup>2</sup> I remember well how this speech reverberated in Europe and how deeply and convincingly it appealed to the discontented, war-weary elements.

It was to these liberal and labour groups that President Wilson most strongly appealed. He drew the distinction strongly between the desires of Governments and of peoples. He wanted to be considered the representative "not of governments but of peoples." And especially he hated the old diplomacy, and made the very first of

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 1.

<sup>2</sup>See Volume III, Document 3.

his Fourteen Points an expression of his ideal of the new diplomacy:

Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind.

This point has been given far too narrow an interpretation: as though it meant that every diplomatic discussion should be open to newspaper correspondents; but what he really did mean is clearly set forth in a curiously little known passage from a letter to the Secretary of State, June 12, 1918:

When I pronounced for open diplomacy, I meant, not that there should be no private discussions of delicate matters, but that no secret agreements should be entered into, and that all international relations, when fixed, should be open, above board, and explicit.

All the nations accepted this principle as the fundamental basis of the peace; there was to be a "new order," a new association. This it was that lay deep down beneath the great popular reception which Wilson received when he reached Europe in December, 1918. Yet there in the background was the mass of ugly old entanglements. America was not bound by them, the President hated them, and considered that he was in no way to recognize them. The masses of the people in Europe—so far as they were articulate—bitterly denounced them. Yet there they were; and there to be dealt with were the Governments that made them or supported them; and it is as necessary to understand the points of view they disclose as it is to understand the equipment of ideas with which America entered the Peace Conference.

## CHAPTER III

### TERMS OF THE PRINCIPAL SECRET TREATIES OF 1915, 1916, AND 1917

**C**ONSIDER exactly what these “secret treaties” were; the actual agreements they contained. Here are not only presented, in outline, those which were revealed when the secrets of the old Russian Foreign Office were disclosed in November, 1917, and later confirmed or further explained at Paris, but others, like the Sykes-Picot treaty and the secret agreement of St. Jean de Maurienne for the partition of Turkey, which emerged into the half light of the Peace Conference and caused a bitter controversy there.

One of the most important of all these secret understandings, in its effect upon the United States, was kept secret, so far as its specific terms were concerned, until the Peace Conference at Paris reached the consideration of the problems of the Pacific. I mean the arrangement between the Allies and Japan concerning the disposition of Shantung in China and the partition of the German Pacific islands between Japan and the British Empire. Only one of these profoundly important treaties—the London treaty of 1915, by which Italy was brought into the war—has thus far had an official publication.

A number of lesser secret “arrangements” which can only be touched upon in this preliminary survey, but which will be fully treated in their proper places, emerged, sometimes almost casually, during the Peace Conference, such, for example, as the agreement between Great Britain

and France for the division of Togoland and the Cameroons in Africa, the further arrangements for the partition of Turkey, the projects for building railroads (and even a pipe line) to connect Mesopotamia with the Mediterranean Sea. Some of these conversations went on, not only after America came into the war, not only after the general acceptance of the peace programme as laid down by President Wilson in January, 1918, but continued straight through the year 1918 and actually into the period of the Peace Conference, as I shall show.

And they are going on still, for they are the natural and inevitable expression of old diplomatic methods. Scarcely a week passes when some such secret deal is not reported. Granted that these represent only glimpses behind the curtain, they indicate a formidable process going on.

## I

### RUSSIA BARGAINS FOR CONSTANTINOPLE; GREAT BRITAIN SECURES RIGHTS IN PERSIA AND TURKEY

In point of time the first of these secret treaties was made between Great Britain and France on the one hand and their ally Russia on the other, and our knowledge of it comes from three memoranda of the Russian Foreign Office, dated March 4, 1915; March 18, 1915, and March 20, 1915. In the first of these memoranda the "wish" of Russia to annex Constantinople, "provided the war is successfully terminated," is set forth; and the assent of France and England is noted, provided their "demands . . . both within the confines of the Ottoman Empire and in other places, are satisfied." The second memorandum reports the "complete consent in writing" by the British Government, "to the annexation by Russia

of the Straits and Constantinople." The third and most important document which finally clenches the whole matter and shows what England was to have as her share of the bargain, is here published in full:

*Confidential Telegram from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Russian Ambassador in London No. 1265*

March 20, 1915.

Referring to the memorandum of the British Embassy here of March 12, 1915, will you please express to Grey the profound gratitude of the Imperial Government for the complete and final assent of Great Britain to the solution of the question of the Straits and Constantinople, in accordance with Russia's desires. The Imperial Government fully appreciates the sentiments of the British Government and feels certain that a sincere recognition of mutual interests will secure forever the firm friendship between Russia and Great Britain.

Having already given its promise respecting the conditions of trade in the Straits and Constantinople, the Imperial Government sees no objection to confirming its assent to the establishment (1) of free transit through Constantinople for all goods not proceeding from or proceeding to Russia, and (2) free passage through the Straits for merchant vessels. . . .

The Imperial Government completely shares the view of the British Government that the holy Moslem places must also in future remain under an independent Moslem rule. It is desirable to elucidate at once whether it is contemplated to leave those places under the rule of Turkey, the Sultan retaining the title of Caliph, or to create new independent States, since the Imperial Government would only be able to formulate its desires in accordance with one or other of these assumptions. On its part the Imperial Government would regard the separation of the Caliphate from Turkey as very desirable. Of course the freedom of pilgrimage must be completely secured.

The Imperial Government confirms its assent to the inclusion of the neutral zone of Persia in the British sphere of influence. At the same time, however, it regards it as just to stipulate that the districts adjoining the cities of Ispahan and Yezd, forming with them one inseparable

whole, should be secured for Russia in view of the Russian interests which have arisen there. The neutral zone now forms a wedge between the Russian and Afghan frontiers, and comes up to the very frontier line of Russia at Zulfagar. Hence a portion of this wedge will have to be annexed to the Russian sphere of influence. Of essential importance to the Imperial Government is the question of railway construction in the neutral zone, which will require further amicable discussion.

The Imperial Government expects that in future its full liberty of action will be recognized in the sphere of influence allotted to it, coupled in particular with the right of preferentially developing in that sphere its financial and economic policies. . . .

(Signed) SAZONOFF.

(Sazonoff was the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.)

The purpose of this secret arrangement is, of course, clear enough. Ever since the time of Peter the Great, Russia had had her covetous eyes upon Constantinople and the Straits, for her ambition and her need was to secure an unrestricted outlet to warm water for her commerce. This she had been prevented from securing, chiefly by the British policy of maintaining the power of the "Sick Man of Europe," the Sultan, who controlled the Bosphorus. She therefore took the earliest opportunity in the great war to demand from her allies the right to annex this Turkish territory (some 1,600 square miles in extent) in case the war was won by the Allies.

But this was only one end of the bargain. As a return for the consent of Great Britain and France (and later Italy) to this extension of Russian territory and power, Russia promises to keep secure the economic interests of "Great Britain and preserve a similar benevolent attitude . . . toward the political aspirations of England in other parts." These "other parts" are Persia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.

Now, in 1907, Great Britain and Russia had entered into

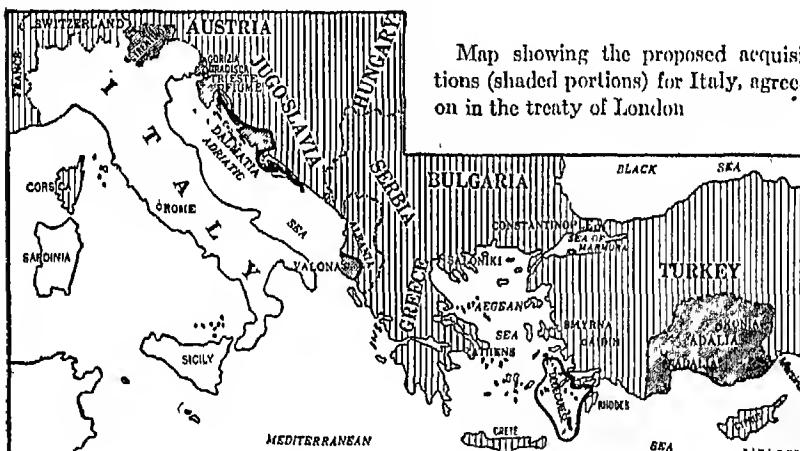
a convention by which the two Governments engaged "to respect the integrity and independence of Persia," though agreeing to the creation of certain "spheres of influence" for commercial purposes. The Persians themselves were not consulted about the matter in 1907, nor later in 1915, when the secret treaty was made. Persia was, indeed, one of the small nations early at Paris appealing to the President for the right of self-determination.

Under this new secret arrangement of 1915 Great Britain gets control of the zone of Persia at that time left neutral, and Russia is assured "full liberty of action" in north Persia. It is significant here that by this move the British Government, which owned a controlling share in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, got within its new "sphere of influence" valuable oil wells. This company holds a sixty-year concession (from 1901) to all the oil fields of Persia, except those in the northern provinces where Russia was in control. This agreement was kept entirely secret from the people of Great Britain and France (as well as from those of Russia) until just before the fall of the old Russian Government, and then it was thought that if the fact that Russia was at last to realize its ancient ambition to get Constantinople was to be dangled attractively before the Russian people it might help to bring them more strongly to the support of the tottering Tsar. So this end of the arrangement was suddenly made public; but its effects seemed exactly contrary to what was expected. It was used by the revolutionaries as only another proof of the duplicity of their own government; and one of the first things the revolutionary government did was to renounce all territorial ambitions, and to take their stand upon the formula: "no annexations, no indemnities, self-determination of peoples."

## II

THE LONDON SECRET TREATY: ITALY IS BROUGHT INTO  
THE WAR BY THE PROMISE OF DALMATIA AND OTHER  
TERRITORY

The second of the secret treaties in point of time—the London treaty of April 26, 1915, which brought Italy into the war—was perhaps the most comprehensive and far-reaching in its results of any of the secret arrangements among the allied Powers. It was the chief obstacle at the



Peace Conference. More actual time was devoted by the Council of Four and other councils and commissions at Paris to the controversies which raged around this treaty than to any other single subject discussed.

When the great war broke out Italy held aloof and bargained with both groups of Powers. It furnished a golden opportunity for her to realize certain nationalistic ambitions. She was animated, as her Foreign Minister (Signor Salandra) said, on October 18, 1914, by the sentiment of "sacro egoismo"—"consecrated selfishness,"

and this, he said, should guide her in her negotiations with the belligerent Powers. Sonnino told the Council of Four, on April 19 (secret minutes), that "Austria had offered Italy the Adige and the islands." But the Allies at London apparently agreed to more favourable terms than the Austrians or the Germans would offer. In defending his action in being a party to this bargain the British Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith (February 5, 1920, at Paisley), said that

at the time the treaty with Italy was made the French and ourselves were fighting for our lives on the Western front. . . . The Italian treaty, for which not only he but France and Russia were equally responsible, represented the terms upon which Italy was prepared to join forces. . . . It involved undoubtedly the acquisition by Italy, if we were successful, of not inconsiderable accessions of territory.

In brief, it gave the Italians the districts of Trentino and Trieste, which were anciently Italian; the County of Gorizia and Gradisca, the territory of Istria, and many islands; and it also gave them a part of the Tyrol in the Brenner Pass, which contained a solid German population of 200,000 which had been Austrian subjects since the fourteenth century. A majority of the population of Istria and Gorizia-Gradisca was Slavic, and not Italian. It gave the Italians also the Province of Dalmatia, with all the best harbours (except Fiume) on the eastern side of the Adriatic, the town and district of Valona in Albania, and it so provided for the neutralization of all other territories touching on the Adriatic Sea as to make that body of water an "Italian lake" and to give Italy control of all the best ports of entry (except Fiume) for much of the great trade of southeastern Europe. Austria-Hungary by this treaty was to be wholly cut off from the sea; and

many hundreds of thousands of Slavs, Germans, Albanians, and Greeks were to be brought under Italian rule.

But this was not all. The Italians were also to get the Dodekanese Islands of the eastern Mediterranean, wholly inhabited by Greeks, and a "right, in case of the partition of Turkey, to a share equal to theirs [Great Britain, France, and Russia] in the basin of the Mediterranean," that is, a large territory in Asia Minor occupied by Greeks, Turks, and other nationalities. They were also promised an extension of their territory in Africa in case France and Great Britain "extend their colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany."

Besides all these territorial promises Italy "is to get a share of the war indemnity" (this is the first formal reference to the subject of a war indemnity) and a loan from Great Britain of £50,000,000. So was Italy's support in the war purchased by concessions.

The final article (16) of this treaty declares:

The present treaty is to be kept secret.

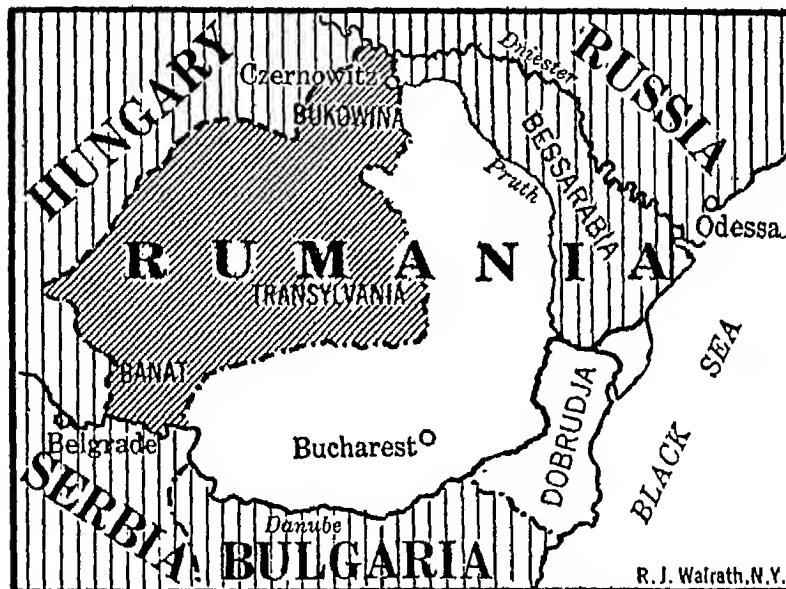
It was not, indeed, officially published until April 20, 1920, and it is the only one of the secret treaties that so far has had an official publication. It was, however, published by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917, and its general terms were known long before that in Germany and Austria. Indeed, they were widely placarded by Austrian generals to stir up the animosity of the Croats and Slovenes against the Italians, for the Croats and Slovenes, hoping for union with Serbia in a new State, and looking to the Allies as their friends, saw Italy rewarded by being given territory and ports which they considered as belonging to them. This treaty also, no doubt, had a disillusioning and poisoning effect all

through the Balkans; it was probably one great argument used by the Germans in persuading Bulgaria to enter the war on the side of the Central Powers. It undoubtedly embittered and prolonged the great war.

### III

#### THE RUMANIAN SECRET TREATY

The case of Rumania was similar to that of Italy, but she hesitated for much longer as to which side she would



Map showing the territories promised to Rumania by secret treaty, on the condition that she take sides with the Allies

fight with. Both offered attractive baits: Germany promised to give her Bessarabia—which belonged to Russia—and Russia promised to give her Transylvania—which belonged to Austria-Hungary. But no agreement was formally made until August 18, 1916, when a secret treaty was signed by the Allies which gave Rumania not

only Transylvania, which contained a large Rumanian population, but also rich agricultural territories in Hungary, and the territory of the Banat, largely occupied by Serbs and Hungarians, and Bukovina, formerly a part of Austria, which is largely occupied by Ruthenians. This treaty was kept a secret between the three great Allies and Rumania from their loyal small ally Serbia, a cause of much later bitterness.

## IV

### FRANCE AND RUSSIA AGREE AS TO THE CONTROL OF POLAND AND THE DISMEMBERMENT OF GERMANY

On March 11, 1917, a month before America came into the war, a remarkable secret agreement was concluded between France and Russia—apparently without consulting Great Britain. The purpose of this was to “allow France and England complete freedom in drawing up the western frontiers of Germany” on condition that they gave to Russia “equal freedom in drawing up our frontiers with Germany and Austria.” In other words, France was to decide what should be done with all of Germany west of the Rhine, and Russia was to have a free hand with Poland. These secret memoranda are so profoundly important, in view of developments later at the Peace Conference, that three of them are here reproduced:

#### DOCUMENT No. 2

*Confidential Telegram from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs  
(M. Pokrovsky) to the Russian Ambassador at Paris*

Petrograd, February 12, 1917.

Copy to London confidentially. At an audience with the Most High (the Tsar) M. Doumergue submitted to the Emperor the desire of France to secure for herself at the end of the present war the restora-

tion of Alsace-Lorraine and a special position in the valley of the River Saar, as well as to attain the political separation from Germany of her trans-Rheinish districts and their organization on a separate basis in order that in future the River Rhine might form a permanent strategical frontier against a Germanic invasion. Doumergue expressed the hope that the Imperial Government would not refuse immediately to draw up its assent to these suggestions in a formal manner.

His Imperial Majesty was pleased to agree to this in principle, in consequence of which I requested Doumergue, after communicating with his Government, to let me have the draft of an agreement, which would then be given a formal sanction by an exchange of notes between the French Ambassador and myself.

Proceeding thus to meet the wishes of our ally, I nevertheless consider it my duty to recall the standpoint put forward by the Imperial Government in the telegram of February 24, 1916, No. 948, to the effect that "while allowing France and England complete liberty in delimiting the Western frontiers of Germany, we expect that the Allies on their part will give us equal liberty in delimiting our frontiers with Germany and Austria-Hungary." Hence the impending exchange of notes on the question raised by Doumergue will justify us in asking the French Government simultaneously to confirm its assent to allowing Russia freedom of action in drawing up her future frontiers in the West. Exact data on the question will be supplied by us in due course to the French Cabinet.

(Signed) POKROVSKY.

#### DOCUMENT No. 3.

*Copy of Note from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French Ambassador at Petrograd (M. Doumergue)*

February 14, 1917.

In your note of to-day's date your Excellency was good enough to inform the Imperial Government that the Government of the Republic was contemplating the inclusion in the terms of peace to be offered to Germany the following demands and guarantees of a territorial nature.

1. Alsace-Lorraine to be restored to France.
2. The frontiers are to be extended at least up to the limits of the former Principality of Lorraine, and are to be drawn up at the dis-

cretion of the French Government so as to provide for the strategical needs and for the inclusion in French territory of the entire iron district of Lorraine and of the entire coal district of the Saar Valley.

3. The rest of the territories situated on the left bank of the Rhine, which now form part of the German Empire, are to be entirely separated from Germany and freed from all political and economic dependence upon her.

4. The territories of the left bank of the Rhine outside French territory are to be constituted an autonomous and neutral State, and are to be occupied by French troops until such time as the enemy States have completely satisfied all the conditions and guarantees indicated in the treaty of peace.

Your Excellency stated that the Government of the Republic would be happy to be able to rely upon the support of the Imperial Government for the carrying out of its plans. By order of his Imperial Majesty, my most august master, I have the honour, in the name of the Russian Government, to inform your excellency by the present note that the Government of the Republic may rely upon the support of the Imperial Government for the carrying out of its plans as set out above.

#### DOCUMENT No. 4

*Telegram from the Russian Ambassador at Paris to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs*

March 11, 1917.

See my reply to telegram No. 167, No. 2. The Government of the French Republic, anxious to confirm the importance of the treaties concluded with the Russian Government in 1915 for the settlement on the termination of the war of the question of Constantinople and the Straits in accordance with Russia's aspirations, anxious, on the other hand, to secure for its ally in military and industrial respects all the guarantees desirable for the safety and the economic development of the empire, recognizes Russia's complete liberty in establishing her western frontiers.

(Signed) ISVOLSKY.

The purpose of the French here is clearly stated: to get Alsace-Lorraine the iron of Lorraine and the coal of the Saar, and to make out of the Rhine provinces a

buffer State to be controlled by the French for an unspecified number of years.<sup>1</sup>

The secret agreement was concluded March 11, 1917, more than two months after the Allies had joined their replies to President Wilson as to peace terms in which they had declared in favour of "self-determination." President Wilson had also come out (January 22, 1917) for a "united, independent, and autonomous Poland." It is remarkable that the British not only denied having approved this treaty but would not admit "encouraging the idea." Mr. Balfour, Foreign Minister, to counteract the effect of the revelation of this secret treaty by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917, said in the House of Commons, on December 19, 1917:

We have never expressed our approval of it. . . . Never did we desire and never did we encourage the idea.

Within a week after this secret agreement between the Tsar and the French Republic was concluded the Russian Government fell. Nevertheless, the French programme, as set forth in this secret treaty, concluded in March, 1917, was practically identical with that for which they laboured at the Peace Conference in 1919, although by roundabout proposals.

## V

### JAPAN AND GREAT BRITAIN DIVIDE UP THE FORMER POSSESSIONS OF GERMANY IN THE FAR EAST

There remains one profoundly important secret arrangement made just before the downfall of the Tsar. It was not published during the Peace Conference, but

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<sup>1</sup>Compare with French claims at the Peace Conference as set forth in Chapter XXV.

was known to the Council of Four at Paris and its provisions were much discussed at the Peace Conference. This was the treaty, or "exchange of ideas," as Baron Makino called it, between the British and French on the one hand and Japan on the other, which laid the basis for the Japanese demands at the Peace Conference. It provided for the disposition of German rights and properties in the Pacific. The Shantung concession in China was to go to Japan, together with all the German islands north of the Equator, while the British were to get all the former German islands south of the Equator.

While this was the bargain actually set forth in the text of the treaties, the real *quid pro quo* on Japan's part was naval assistance against the U-boats in the Mediterranean, which Japan, despite her obligations as an ally, refused to give until she had received the pledge asked. The negotiations lasted a whole month, and the situation in the Mediterranean grew so serious that Great Britain finally agreed to the Japanese demands on February 16, 1917. Lloyd George in explaining this agreement to the Council of Three (the representatives of Japan not being present) made this statement:

Mr. Lloyd George explained that at that time the submarine campaign had become very formidable. Most of the torpedo-boat destroyers were in the North Sea and there was a shortage of these craft in the Mediterranean. Japanese help was urgently required and Japan had asked for this arrangement [the agreement regarding the North Pacific Islands and Shantung] to be made. We had been very pressed and had agreed.<sup>1</sup>

Here is the exact wording of the first memorandum dated at Tokio, Japan, February 16, 1917. It is from

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 22.

the British Ambassador to Viscount Motono, the Japanese Foreign Minister:

With reference to the subject of our conversation of the 27th ultimo, when your Excellency informed me of the desire of the Imperial Government to receive an assurance that on the occasion of the Peace Conference his Britannic Majesty's Government will support the claims of Japan in regard to the disposal of Germany's right in Shantung and possessions in islands north of the Equator, I have the honour, under instructions received from his Britannic Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to communicate to your Excellency the following message from his Britannic Majesty's Government:

His Majesty's Government accedes with pleasure to the request of the Japanese Government for assurance that they will support Japan's claims in regard to the disposal of Germany's rights in Shantung and possessions in islands north of the Equator on the occasion of the Peace Conference, it being understood that the Japanese Government will, in the eventual peace settlement, treat in the same spirit Great Britain's claims to German islands south of the Equator.

On February 19, 1917, after the really important matters had been settled, Viscount Motono wrote to the Russian and French Ambassadors at Tokio that inasmuch as the Allies have been negotiating for the "disposition of the Bosphorus, Constantinople, and the Dardanelles," that the time has come for Japan also to "express her desiderata," and tells them what she "intends to demand" at the peace negotiations, namely the cession of Shantung and the islands north of the Equator. France, on her part, agreed on March 1. The price she demanded was that China be brought into the war on the side of the Allies. This was an euphemism for the withdrawal of Japanese objection to China's entrance into the war. China had offered three times before this to join the Allies, but had been dissuaded at first by Great Britain on the ground that it would displease

Japan, one of whose statesmen had said, "Japan cannot afford to see 400 million Chinese armed for war." Later France and Great Britain urged China to come in, but Japan and Germany opposed, although they were supposed to be at war with one another. Russia, then just falling into the abyss, agreed with its last breath to this secret treaty. And finally, on March 23, after everything was settled, Japan took Italy into her confidence.

This treaty caused one of the great crises of the Peace Conference, and was the chief influence in what is known as the Shantung Settlement. It was made after the Allies had declared their peace principles in January, 1917 (in reply to President Wilson's request), and before America came into the war in April. The effect of this treaty upon the discussions at Paris will be more fully developed in the chapters dealing with the Japanese crisis.

## VI

### CARVING TURKEY

The greatest and richest of the spoils of the war was the Turkish Empire. It was to be expected that the disposition of these enormously valuable territories should present a golden opportunity for the old diplomacy and this is what, in reality, we find. Here are a remarkable group of secret treaties, "arrangements," "conversations," the most entangling of any, and at the same time the most enlightening in their disclosures of the real purposes and methods of the "old order." Here we find, most clearly exhibited, the newer economic aspects of diplomacy, with its preoccupation with oil deposits, railroads, and pipe lines. In the case of Turkey the secret conversations did not stop with the entry of America into the war, they did not stop even after the

acceptance of the Fourteen Points as the basis of peace with their provisions concerning open diplomacy and the agreement (in Point XII) regarding the disposal of Turkey. They even continued secretly between Great Britain and France after the Peace Conference began to sit!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TURKISH EMPIRE AS BOOTY—TERMS OF THE SECRET TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS FOR THE PARTITION OF TURKEY

**W**E COME now to the most illuminating of all the exhibits of the old diplomacy—the group of “secret treaties,” “arrangements,” “conversations” by which the old Turkish Empire was to be carved up between the allied nations. We can now set forth not only the terms of these treaties, but the whole enlightening history of their stormy progress through the Peace Conference, where in secret councils the real purposes of the nations were bluntly set forth.

Turkey was by all odds the richest spoil of the war, richer than Shantung. There were indeed colonies in Africa and islands in the Pacific, there were thin border provinces in Europe, like Alsace-Lorraine and Dalmatia, but none of them compared in sheer, undeveloped wealth with the old Empire of the Turks. Here were untouched deposits of oil, copper, silver, salt; vast riches in agricultural land easily within reach of the irrigation engineer. Here, above all, were large and industrious populations, long enured to labour, which, given a stable government, would immediately become great producers of wealth and creators of trade. Moreover, the break-up of Turkey meant new arrangements in Egypt and new possibilities of opening to communication and exploitation another old empire—that of Persia. The control of the eastern Mediterranean also

turned upon the possession of the coastal cities of Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine.

Germany had had a clear vision of the enormous importance of the Near East. Before the war she had projected and partly built the Berlin-Bagdad railroad and had attempted "peaceful penetration" by every means in her power. The great war has even been described as primarily a struggle for the domination of the Near East.

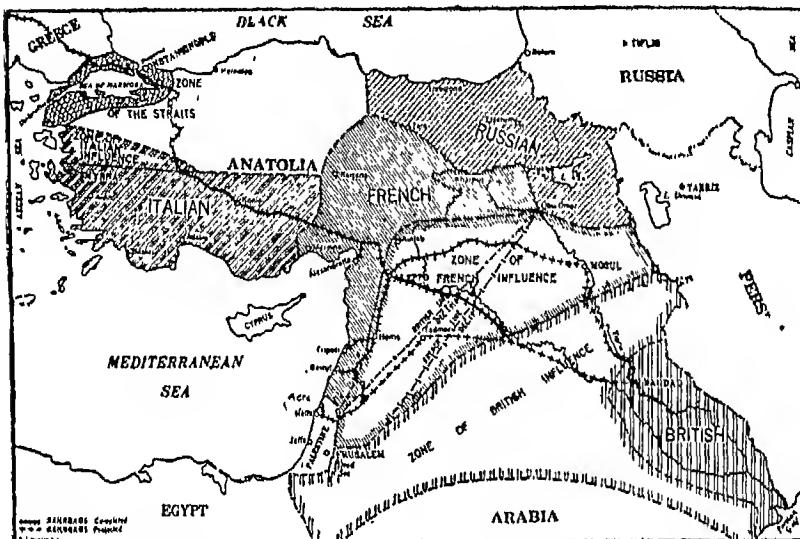
It was quite natural that allied diplomats, once the war broke out, should begin to consider what would happen if they won and Germany lost; what was to be done with Turkey?

In the case of the secret treaties with Italy, Rumania, and possibly Japan, the Allies had the excuse that such arrangements were necessary in order to bring in new nations to support the allied cause in their desperate struggle with Germany, but in the case of the Turkish treaties, except possibly for the slice of Turkish territory given Italy, there can be no such excuse. These were frankly arrangements for the division of the spoils of the war.

Secret negotiations began soon after the great war broke out, and in the spring of 1915 the very first of the important secret treaties among the Allies (described in the last chapter) gave Russia, "provided the war is successfully terminated," her ancient ambition—Constantinople. Great Britain in return was to have certain rather vague but vast "satisfactions . . . within the Ottoman Empire, and in other places."

So far, so good. But about the same time the Allies were raising heaven and earth to get Italy into the war. Germany and Austria had dangled glittering offers before the Italians to get them in on their side. Italy knew

her power and drove a hard bargain with the Allies. She also looked with longing eyes toward the Turkish treasure house, and provided in the London treaty (also described in the last chapter) for a "right, in case of the



#### HOW TURKEY WAS CARVED BY SIX SECRET AGREEMENTS .

The Franco-Russian-British agreement of March, 1915, gave Russia Constantinople. The Sazonov-Paléologue treaty of April 26, 1916, delimited the French and Russian shares in Asia. The Sykes-Picot treaty of May, 1916, divided what lay beyond between France and Great Britain. The treaty of London, April 26, 1915, gave Italy the region of Adalia. The St. Jean de Maurienne agreement, completed in August, 1917, promised Italy Smyrna and the rest of the territory shown. The Clemenceau-Lloyd George understanding of December, 1918, transferred Mosul to Great Britain, but left a dispute as to whether the new line should run east or west of Tadmar.

partition of Turkey, to a share equal to theirs (Great Britain, France, and Russia) in the basin of the Mediterranean—that part of it which adjoins the province of Adalia."

These "rights" and "shares" were vague, only Italy's share being even definitely located, and to the diplomats, particularly the French, extremely unsatisfactory. For

the British were actually on the ground and had been negotiating with the Arab, King Hussein, as to the creation of an independent Arab State in return for Arab assistance in the war. The French were fearful that the British would become too powerful in that part of the world, get too strong a grip on Turkey. Therefore, they began by negotiating with their old friends the Russians, and at the same time demanded a "showdown" with the British. The result was two new secret treaties devoted wholly to the disposal of Turkey.

First, the Sazonov-Paléologue treaty between Russia and France (disclosed in a memorandum of the old Russian Foreign Office dated a year later, March, 1917) dealing with northern Asiatic Turkey. Under this arrangement Russia staked out a vast domain, 60,000 square miles, between the Persian frontier and the Black Sea, with rich resources of copper, silver, and salt. The fortress of Erzerum and the important port of Trebizond were included in this territory.

The French for their share were given a great slice to the south and west reaching to the Mediterranean, the actual boundaries of which she was to determine by arrangements with the British.

Second, northern Turkey having thus been disposed of, arrangements were made between France and Great Britain regarding the vast southern part of Asiatic Turkey. Sir Mark Sykes represented Great Britain and M. Picot represented France in these negotiations; and the resulting secret treaty of May, 1916, was called the Sykes-Picot treaty. Under this arrangement (see map page 66) France got all the important coast of Syria on the Mediterranean as far south as Acre, and all the ports—except that Alexandretta was to be free to British trade.

France also got a great hinterland—a veritable principality—reaching east as far as the Tigris River.

Great Britain got for direct administration only the Mediterranean ports of Acre and Haifa and the portion of Mesopotamia between Bagdad and the Persian Gulf—a tidy bit of territory with great riches in oil and in agricultural land when irrigated.

Between these claims, and north of the Arabian peninsula, lay a great interior mass of Turkish territory still not disposed of, including the important cities of Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo. This was adjudged to some hypothetical “Arab State or confederation of Arab States,” with which France and Great Britain were to come to an understanding later. But this territory also was divided into zones of influence in which the respective Powers should have “prior rights over local enterprises and loans” and “be the only ones to furnish foreign advisers and officials.”

There remained Palestine, and this was set aside also for future agreement.

But this secret treaty not only dealt with divisions of territory. It also contained a solemn agreement on the part of the French and British to allow no other nations any rights in all this great part of the old Turkish Empire—this undoubtedly meant their ally, Italy—and plans were made to begin economic development by building a new railroad from Bagdad direct to Aleppo, where Great Britain could get connection out to the sea at Alexandretta for her Mesopotamian oil.

No sooner were these secret agreements made between the French and British than the Italians, no doubt learning of the general provisions in the roundabout ways known to the old diplomacy, became much discontented. They saw that France was getting a much larger share in

Turkey than was Italy, under the secret treaty of London. So new secret negotiations began, this time including the Italians, and dragged along during all the year just before the Americans came into the war and at the very time that allied statesmen were issuing declarations of unselfish war aims.

In April, 1917 (America declared war April 6), Mr. Lloyd George met the French and Italians at St. Jean de Maurienne and tried to patch up the disagreements and so satisfy the Italians. There were other important matters at issue here—proposals for a separate peace with Austria-Hungary just launched by the “Sixtus letters,” and the prosecution of war in the Near East, in which France and Great Britain needed unqualified Italian support. And the Italians never gave their support for nothing!

To get this, Lloyd George offered to give Smyrna and certain other Turkish territory to the Italians.

Mr. Balfour, his Foreign Minister, it will be remembered, was just then in America, helping to cheer along American participation in the war. He told Wilson and Clemenceau during a meeting of the Council on May 11, 1919:

While I was away Mr. Lloyd George, no doubt for reasons which appeared to him sufficient, had, at St. Jean de Maurienne, agreed to let the Italians have Smyrna on certain conditions.<sup>1</sup>

But even this did not satisfy the Italians. The negotiations dragged along and finally, in August, a secret agreement was reached giving Italy not only Smyrna, but also a zone of influence of great value north of it, inhabited chiefly by Greeks and Turks. This agreement was, however, to be dependent upon the approval of the Russians.

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 11.

But the Russian Government, which had just been overthrown by the revolutionists, never gave that consent. The result was that a vast controversy developed at the Peace Conference as to whether or not the promises to the Italians of St. Jean de Maurienne were binding upon France and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

In January, 1918, the Fourteen Points were set forth by President Wilson as a proposed basis of the peace and Lloyd George told the world (January 5) that the Allies were no longer fettered by the secret treaties in discussing the future of Turkey; yet these secret discussions kept right on, for the spoils to be divided were indeed rich.

In November, at the Armistice with Germany, the President's programme of settlement was generally accepted as the basis of the coming peace. It included Point I providing for open diplomacy, and Point XII relating to Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Yet these secret conversations between the British and the French relating to their Turkish claims kept right on. We have the most unimpeachable evidence of this in the words of M. Pichon, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, during a secret meeting of the Four in Lloyd George's apartment on March 20, 1919. Further reference will be made to this meeting later, for it was important in many respects. M. Pichon said at this time that after the agreement with the Italians in 1916 "there had been a long further correspondence and an exchange of many notes between France and Great Britain" concerning these Turkish claims.

Of course, these conversations were secret, and it appeared that it was the British now who were not satisfied. They were doing the brunt of the fighting without French help, and they wanted more concessions in Tur-

<sup>1</sup>See for a more complete account of this controversy, Chapter XXXIII.

<sup>2</sup>See Document 8, Volume III, for text of Fourteen Points.

key. Lloyd George's immensely clever gesture (in January, 1918) of putting the old treaties regarding Turkey aside not only helped to reassure labour in England, whipped up recruiting in India where the Moslems were fearful regarding the future of Turkey, and gave evidence of support of President Wilson, but it also frightened the French to such an extent that they were willing to buy a confirmation of the Sykes-Picot treaty by consenting to its revision. Never was there a cleverer stroke. It did duty at once in three different causes and in both kinds of diplomacy! It backed up the open diplomacy of Wilson, it scored a point in the secret dealings with the French.

Here we have again Pichon's narrative:

As the difficulties between the two Governments continued, and as the French Government particularly did not wish them to reach a point where ultimate agreement would be compromised, the President of the Council [Clemenceau], on his visit to London in December, 1918, had asked Mr. Lloyd George to confirm the agreement between the two countries. Mr. Lloyd George had replied that he saw no difficulty about the rights of France in Syria and Cilicia, but he made demands for certain places which he thought should be included in the British zone, and which, under the 1916 agreement, were in the French zone of influence, namely, Mosul. He also asked for Palestine.<sup>1</sup>

This was in December, 1918, after the close of the war, when, it must be remembered, the Allies had accepted the Fourteen Points as the basis of the peace. It was also just at the time when President Wilson was ready to sail for Europe to help make the peace.

But even then the discussions were not at an end. They continued privately between the British and French (unknown either to the "associated" Americans or the "allied" Italians) even after the Peace Conference began to sit. The French hated to yield, and Clemenceau's

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, March 20.

final acceptance of the British proposal was not given until February 15—a month after the Peace Conference meetings began. The difficulty lay in drawing the new line of demarcation. The French still wished to retain all the hinterland of Syria; while the British insisted that the line should run far enough to the northwest to give them the oasis of Tadmor and complete control of a line of railway (to be built) passing through it between Bagdad and the port of Haifa on the Mediterranean. In short, they insisted on having a railroad line entirely within their own sphere of influence, else in case of war their oil supplies from Mesopotamia might be held up by the French. On this point the transaction was still hanging fire when the conference of March 20 was called at Lloyd George's apartment and the whole entanglement was disclosed.

As I have said, the meeting of March 20 was one of the great and crucial meetings of the Peace Conference. It was held long before the policy of the small secret conferences of the "Big Four" had been formally adopted. The Council of Ten was then the official body. So that this meeting of March 20 was secret even from the other members of the Ten, and the minutes of it were not included with the official bound set supplied to President Wilson.<sup>1</sup> Most of the "Big Four" meetings were in President Wilson's study, but this was across the street in Lloyd George's flat in the Rue Nitot. President Wilson represented America; Lloyd George, Balfour, and General Allenby represented the British Empire; Clemenceau, Pichon, and Berthelot represented France, and Orlando and Sonnino, Italy.

It was evidently considered a vital meeting. President Wilson had only just returned from America. Before he

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 1, for the minutes of this entire discussion.

had gone away he had done two very important things: First, he had forced the adoption, after fierce controversy, of the mandatory principle for the control of the "old empires" and of the former German colonies. Second, he had made a blunt declaration of the American attitude toward the old secret treaties, although at that time he knew definitely of only a few of them and had no idea of the vast web of secret diplomacy yet to be revealed.

As the United States of America were not bound by any of the [secret] treaties in question they were quite ready to approve a settlement on a basis of facts.<sup>1</sup>

There had evidently been some hard thinking about these pronouncements of the President while he was away. What did he mean? How far did he intend to go? For if the mandatory system were to be sincerely adopted as the policy of the world it meant a knockout blow to many of the advantages of foreign spheres of influence in which the old diplomacy was so deeply interested. It meant, for example, the "open door"! And of what use was colonial expansion without economic control or privilege?

And a settlement on a "basis of facts"! The old order wanted possession, not facts. It would let in at once inquiries, not of what they, the great Powers, wanted for themselves in oil, silver, copper, pipe lines, but what the people who inhabited all these vast regions, of whom nobody was thinking, what they wanted, and how their true welfare was to be secured. Facts meant all sorts of embarrassing inquiries into oil supply, control of railroads, domination of ports and sea-channels, armament of natives, fortifications, even customs duties and finances.

These two principles of the President, then, if carried

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 1.

out, would knock the old diplomacy sky-high, and rob the secret treaties of every shred of their importance or value.

Hence the importance of this meeting of March 20. The French had put up on the wall of Lloyd George's study a large map of Asiatic Turkey with territories coloured to show the entire history of the secret negotiations. This was the first occasion, I believe, that President Wilson had ever heard of the Sykes-Picot treaty, or of the agreements at St. Jean de Maurienne.

I remember afterward his speaking to me with great disgust of this Sykes-Picot treaty; said that it sounded like the name of a tea; called it "a fine example of the old diplomacy."

Pichon opened the meeting with a long statement of the whole history of the effort to carve up Turkey, made a defense of French claims, and objected to the British demand for more rights in Turkey. Lloyd George followed with a defense of British claims, at the same time charging that the French were preparing to encroach upon the Arabs. He argued bluntly that the British had done the fighting in Turkey almost without French help, and, therefore, ought to have what they wanted. Here are some of the things he said:

He had begged the French Government to coöperate, and had pointed out to them that it would enable them to occupy Syria, although, at the time, the British troops had not yet occupied Gaza. This had occurred in 1917 and 1918, at a time when the heaviest casualties in France also were being incurred by British troops. From that time onwards most of the heavy and continuous fighting in France had been done by British troops, although Marshal Pétain had made a number of valuable smaller attacks. This was one of the reasons why he had felt justified in asking Marshal Foch for troops [for use in Turkey]. He had referred to this in order to show that the

reason we had fought so hard in Palestine was not because we had not been fighting in France.

Mr. Lloyd George then disclosed the fact of a secret arrangement of the British with King Hussein of the Arabs which was older than the Sykes-Picot treaty. And it instantly appeared that not even the French had previously known of it. It was secret from them! Here is what Pichon says:

M. PICHON said that this undertaking had been made by Great Britain (Angleterre) alone. France had never seen it until a few weeks before when Sir Maurice Hankey had handed him a copy.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said the agreement might have been made by England (Angleterre) alone, but it was England (Angleterre) who had organized the whole of the Syrian campaign. There would have been no question of Syria but for England (Angleterre). Great Britain had put from 900,000 to 1,000,000 men in the field against Turkey, but Arab help had been essential; that was a point on which General Allenby could speak.

General ALLENBY said it had been invaluable.

M. PICHON said that this had never been contested, but how could France be bound by an agreement the very existence of which was unknown to her at the time when the 1916 agreement was signed?

At this point, the controversy having become heated, President Wilson broke in with a blunt inquiry as to why he was at the Conference.

President Wilson said that he would now seek to establish his place in the Conference. Up to the present he had had none. He could only be here, like his colleague, M. Orlando, as one of the representatives assembled to establish the peace of the world. This was his only interest, although, of course, he was a friend of both parties to the controversy. He was not indifferent to the understanding which had been reached between the British and French Governments, and

was interested to know about the undertakings to King Hussain and the 1916 agreement, but it was not permissible for him to express an opinion thereon.

He then made observations in which he again set forth clearly the American position and programme.

First, the right of self-determination of these people. Here are his words:

The point of view of the United States of America was . . . indifferent to the claims both of Great Britain and France over peoples unless those peoples wanted them. One of the fundamental principles to which the United States of America adhered was the consent of the governed. This was ingrained in the thought of the United States of America. Hence, the . . . United States [wanted to know] whether France would be agreeable to the Syrians. The same applied as to whether Great Britain would be agreeable to the inhabitants of Mesopotamia. It might not be his business, but if the question was made his business, owing to the fact that it was brought before the Conference, the only way to deal with it was to discover the desires of the population of these regions.

Second, he wanted a settlement on a basis, not of secret diplomacy, but of facts.

The present controversy . . . broadened into a case affecting the peace of the whole world. . . . He was told that, if France insisted on occupying Damaseus and Aleppo, there would be instant war.

He therefore suggested a commission of inquiry in Turkey, and he gave his opinion of exactly what they should do.

Their object should be to elucidate the state of opinion and the soil to be worked on by any mandatory. They should be asked to come back and tell the Conference what they found with regard to these matters . . . it would . . . convince the world that the Conference had tried to do all it could to find the most scientific basis

possible for a settlement. The commission should be composed of an equal number of French, British, Italian, and American representatives. He would send it with *carte blanche* to tell the facts as they found them.

The President grew most enthusiastic and urgent in pressing this idea. M. Clemenceau said he "adhered in principle" to an inquiry—one of the favourite phrases of diplomacy—but if an inquiry was made he wanted it to apply, not only to Syria and the French claims, but to Palestine and Mesopotamia, where the British were. While Lloyd George also accepted the idea "in principle" and said he was ready to support such an inquiry he was lukewarm. However, the President considered his suggestion accepted. I saw him shortly afterward, and he told me with enthusiasm about his plan:

"I want to put the two ablest Americans now in Europe on that commission."

He asked me if I could make any suggestions as to possible appointees. I suggested President Henry Churchill King of Oberlin College, a man of sound judgment and high ideals. The President immediately asked me to get in touch with President King and he was appointed, with Charles R. Crane, as a member of the commission.

But the French refused to appoint their members, and the British blew hot and cold, and finally, after long delays, the American commissioners started out alone, made their investigations in Turkey, and brought back a report.

Of further developments, however, in the Turkish controversy, I shall treat in later chapters, my only purpose here being to present and illustrate the methods of the old secret diplomacy. Suffice it to say that Presi-

dent Wilson's proposal to base a final settlement on the findings of a disinterested commission bore no fruit in the end, for it was frustrated by the French with the tacit support of the British.

One more development in the struggle, however, must be noted because it illustrates vividly the concern of secret diplomacy not only with political and territorial expansion, but—far more important—with immediate economic exploitation. Although nothing was settled regarding Turkey, though no peace had been made, it suddenly emerged in the secret councils, May 22, that powerful British and French commercial interests were at that moment negotiating for the laying of a pipe line from the Mesopotamian oil fields to the port of Tripoli in the French zone of Syria. These negotiations had been initiated by the British—represented by Mr. Walter Long—though Lloyd George told the council emphatically that he (Lloyd George) had not been spoken to about them. On the part of the French they were managed by M. Beranger, and Clemenceau also denied that he had known anything about them.

He [Clemenceau] only heard this very morning of the negotiation between M. Beranger and some British petroleum people for laying a pipe line to the coast. He knew nothing of the details of the arrangement. . . . He was not very much interested in this matter, as Lloyd George had erroneously assumed on the previous day.

To this Lloyd George replied:

Of the pipe line he knew nothing, and was very annoyed when he first learned of it. There seemed to have been some negotiation between the people in Paris interested in oil and those in London. Consequently, at the moment when M. Clemenceau had said that he did not like the arrangement (M. Clemenceau interjected that he had referred to something quite different), he had cancelled it. He did

not want to be mixed up with oil trusts in London or America or Paris, as he was afraid it would vitiate the whole business. Consequently, on the previous afternoon, he had written to M. Clemenceau to cancel the whole of these oil negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

In this connection it is to be noted, as evidence of the trend of the times, that these private compacts are becoming more and more predominantly economic in character. The Sykes-Picot agreement was political in its main features, though with a strong economic flavour pervading all its terms; the latest Franco-Turkish treaty (1921) is almost wholly economic—indeed, the French renounce a narrow political position in return for broader economic advantages. In the negotiations concerning the railroads and pipe line which followed the Sykes-Picot treaty, economic considerations overrode political transactions. It is such economic “deals” that are undoubtedly going on in every corner of the world to-day. Although concerned primarily with the production and exchange of commodities, they often profoundly affect destinies of large local populations and the whole scheme of international relations. Although frequently negotiated by industrial and financial, rather than diplomatic agents, Governments stand behind them with the armed force of nations. The old order changes its methods, but not its spirit.

Such were, in general, the desires, needs, ambitions of the allied Governments set forth in the secret treaties. So they intended, if they won the war, to divide up the world; so they actually tried to divide it up at the Peace Conference. Though outwardly they were combating imperialism as symbolized by Germany, they were themselves seeking vast extensions of their own imperial and

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 22.

economic power. They kept these agreements secret from their own people, fearing their effect on the great masses of the workers and the liberal groups; they kept them secret also from their smaller allies, like Serbia, and they kept them secret from America both before and after America came into the war. These treaties, partly disclosed in enemy countries through the publication of the Bolsheviks, and greatly exaggerated there, were powder and shot—army corps!—to the enemy, for they were used to prove the contentions of the German war lords that the Allies were really fighting to gobble up the world.

And finally they bore a crop of suspicion, controversy, balked ambition, which twice, at least, nearly wrecked the Peace Conference, poisoned its discussions, and warped and disfigured its final decisions.

I am conscious that this makes a pretty dark picture, but it is necessary to look squarely at it in considering the atmosphere in which the Paris negotiations were carried on. And yet, through it all, the President not only combated, steadily and with determination, settlements based upon these old secret desires and agreements, but patiently worked out provisions in the Covenant of the League of Nations which, in future, should wipe out the entire disgraceful old system. Article XVIII of the Covenant reads:

Every treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any member of the league shall be forthwith registered with the secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered.

This provision, if once all the nations go into the league with determination and good-will, is of an importance that can scarcely be exaggerated. It would

cut away all secret diplomacy; it would usher in the new era of open diplomacy.

Yet everything depends upon the good-will and sincerity with which the nations support and carry out these provisions. President Wilson could help give the nations an instrumentality for expressing their good-will, but he could not give them good-will. Since the League of Nations came into existence more than one hundred and fifty treaties have been registered under this provision—a great step—and yet we know that “secret arrangements” are still being made, all or parts of which have not been registered.

I have endeavoured thus to set forth the ripe products of the old diplomacy. To a certain extent, of course, these arrangements were forced upon the Allies as a measure of war; for Germany was also making secret offers to Italy, to Rumania, to Bulgaria, to Turkey, and probably to Japan, which had to be countered. We know that Germany even tried secret diplomacy with Mexico. Leaders of liberal and progressive minds on all domestic issues, like Asquith and Grey, were forced, owing to the antiquated and evil system of the old diplomacy, to take part in such secret practices.

In the high emotional time of danger and suffering under the leadership of President Wilson these old aims, these secret desires, were apparently forgotten, apparently disclaimed. The whole world was momentarily lifted to a higher moral plane. The people of the world were with the President. But the moment the war closed the reaction began. The old Governments and the old system were in control, and there was a portentous “slump in idealism” which I shall describe in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SLUMP IN IDEALISM

ALL great human catastrophes are more or less alike. I remember being in San Francisco just after the great earthquake of 1906, in which for a brief moment, a few weeks, men were shaken out of themselves.

“Men served instead of demanding service; they gave instead of receiving. They helped their neighbours. For a splendid moment this ruined city was a Christian city.”

People called it “earthquake love,” and it soon faded. Great Utopian schemes for the rebuilding of the city, the widening of the streets, the removal of Chinatown, plans for a better city government, and more coöperation between labour and capital were eagerly decided upon. Nothing in the future was to be as it had been in the past. San Francisco was to be beautiful, clean, righteous!

“The period of mutual aid lasted about one month. . . . Gradually, a little here and a little there, personal greed and private interest began to break through. Men remembered themselves again.”<sup>1</sup>

The grand schemes of coöperation were forgotten, the Burnham plan for the rebuilding of a more beautiful city was blocked by the fierce needs and ambitions of private property owners, labour and capital began to

<sup>1</sup>“A Test of Men: The San Francisco Disaster,” by Ray Stannard Baker, *American Magazine*, November, 1906.

quarrel again, the "political boss," temporarily deposed, came back into power. "Why should it be necessary," the observer cried out, "for intelligent men, capable of serving and working together, as they did in the early days after the earthquake, to slump back into the reign of instinct, and submit themselves again to the law of the jungle?"

How often in the months immediately following the Armistice with Germany, November 11, 1918, was one reminded of that former catastrophe! The common suffering and the common fear of the war had produced the same splendid moment of "world love"; the allied nations had subordinated their own interests and had worked nobly together. The "old order" was forever to be put aside—a "world beautiful" was to be constructed upon the shaken and smoking ruins of the old civilization. Small nations as well as great were to have justice, and the great were to disarm. There was to be a world league for peace.

No sooner had the war ended than the high emotional and moral enthusiasm which marked its concluding year began to fade away. The spirit of unity began to disintegrate. The Allies had not, after all, common purposes. Each had its ancient loyalties, necessities, jealousies, ambitions, and these immediately began to reassert themselves. The purposes of the secret treaties were again crowded into the foreground. No miracle had really occurred. Men found themselves back in the old familiar world—and, more than that, in a state of exhaustion and demoralization which tended to irritate rather than calm the natural differences of opinion. It must never be forgotten that it was in a time of national shell-shock, exaggerated appearances, exaggerated fears, that the Treaty was made.

There is no true historical approach to the events of the Peace Conference without a clear understanding of these changes in psychology. It is significant that the forces which had given the President the strongest support and relied upon him most implicitly, that is, the liberal and labour groups in the allied countries (and indeed in Germany and Austria), were also the first to discover the sudden and cynical change in sentiment. No one who was in Europe immediately after the Armistice in November and December, 1918, and January, 1919 (as I was), will ever forget the cry of alarm which went up from all these groups when the leaders of the old order again began to show their heads.

"Have we lost the peace?" cries a writer in the *Herald*, the principal labour journal of Great Britain.

"The soldiers won the war," it says, "our demagogues will lose the peace."

The *Manchester Guardian*, the leading liberal newspaper of Great Britain, comments as early as December 3 on the "Slump in Idealism," and on December 19—some five weeks after the Armistice and less than a month before the sitting of the Peace Conference—thus reports the situation:

President Wilson has come with certain perfectly definite principles of policy in his mind and a perfectly resolute intention to see them carried out in any settlement to which he is to be a party. These are the principles which he himself has enunciated, which the vast majority of the American people approve and which the Allies have quite formally and definitely accepted. Yet, in spite of the fact that they have thus been accepted and that the surrender of Germany took place on that clear understanding and no other, President Wilson cannot long have breathed the diplomatic air of Paris without discovering certain strange discrepancies between this professed acceptance and the sectional and purely nationalistic demands actually put forward in various countries, not excluding our own.

# The World Cartoon



NOTHING DOING!

*President (Esau) Wilson: "It's a nice mess, Jacob."*  
*John (Jacob) Bull: "Nothing to the mess I should be in if I took it."*

The *Nation*, another liberal journal, cried out, December 21, in these words:

We hear little or nothing of the League of Nations. On the other hand, we hear a good deal of a series of purely individual nationalistic adventures. The restoration of Alsace-Lorraine cannot be regarded as one of them. It comes within the Fourteen Points, and the reunion with the motherland is a matter of form rather than of principle. But a French protectorate on the left bank of the Rhine, a French annexation of the Saar coal fields, a Belgian claim to Dutch soil and German soil, an Italian claim to Dalmatia, bring us straight back to Brest-Litovsk, to Might-policy, to strategic frontiers, to the practice of aggressive nationalism. So does Mr. George's theory of indemnities as entitling a victor nation to recover the whole cost of war from the vanquished. Put the theory and practice together, and add to them a war on revolutionary Russia, and the Fourteen Points are destroyed. Mr. Wilson's mission is sterilized, and the policy of labour turned down.

Much the same alarm is expressed in the French and Italian liberal and labour papers and by the leaders of these groups. In *L'Œuvre* of Paris, January 10, two days before the first session of the Peace Conference, we read:

The luminous outlook of a universal peace, founded on mutual confidence and friendship of nations, is more and more becoming reduced to a new equilibrium of forces. . . . There is only talk of reinforcing frontiers, and the old precept, "If you want peace, prepare for war," seems to be an obsession in the minds of the old politicians charged with renewing the world.

The same note of apprehension and pessimism is struck by onlooking liberals in neutral countries, who see perhaps more clearly than any others the power of the old diplomacy and the strength of the old nationalism, the entanglements of the secret treaties. Georg Brandes, the

Scandinavian scholar, in an interview with an American correspondent, had this to say:

The Allies are drunk with victory and are too bent upon inflicting punishments to make a just and durable peace. I am an old man, and can well remember that when Paris surrendered (in 1870) train-loads of provisions were in movement from England within twenty-four hours to feed the hungry. But what do we see now? Germany surrendered more than three months ago, and the Allies still prevent the provisioning of Germany. Surely no peace made in that spirit can be followed by those feelings of political contentment upon which any peace must rest. . . .

I admire and appreciate the principles of President Wilson; but I cannot understand how any one who has his eyes open for a moment believes in their realization. . . . Wilson's policy of moderation is the only right one. . . . War cannot bring peace. Only love and mercy bring peace, and where are love and mercy?<sup>1</sup>

Leaders of these groups feared that the President did not fully realize the extent and power of the reaction against him. The *Herald*, the National Labour Weekly, in December appeared with these words emblazoned upon its entire front page:

“Don’t Be Wangled, Wilson!”

On December 23, 1918, Bishop Gore of Oxford, who had just returned from America, warns the President in a personal letter that he has “become more and more convinced how much there is among the ‘educated’ classes in Europe, which is set to resist the idea of international justice, and the principles of peace settlements for which you stand. But I am also convinced that the heart and mind of the common people are with you.”

If the liberal and labour groups, who were the most sincere supporters of the President’s programme, were alarmed, the old leaders and the conservative press grew more and more confident and cynical.

<sup>1</sup>William C. Dreher in the *New York Nation*.

THE HERALD—December 21, 1910.

**Britain's New War with Russia.** (See page 2)

# THE HERALD

THE NATIONAL LABOUR WEEKLY

New Series, No. 979

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1910.

EDINBURGH

ONE PENNY

**DON'T  
BE  
WANGLE ,  
WILSO !**

(See page 7)

"Here and there," remarks the Paris *Figaro*, "one hears of people who still dream of a Wilson peace."

"Let us reconstruct Central Europe in accordance with French interests," says *Le Temps*.

On November 26, 1918, Winston Spencer Churchill, British Minister of Munitions, speaking at Dundee, said he was a friend of the League of Nations, but it was no substitute for the supremacy of the British fleet; and he declared that none of the German colonies would ever be restored to Germany, and none of the conquered parts of Turkey would ever be returned to Turkey.

Early in December, 1918, I was in Italy and heard the talk everywhere (how different from that of April, 1918!) of the expansion of Italy, the possession of the Dalmatian Coast and the control by Italy of the entire Adriatic. And there had already been fighting in Fiume between the Italians and Croats for the possession of that city.

The reaction was not due merely to the leaders—although they were bitterly blamed by the liberal and labour groups—but was in the very psychology of the masses of the people. The shrewdest political leader in Europe, or indeed in the world, Mr. Lloyd George, knew this well enough, staged his general election for December 14 at the climax of this reaction, made his issue a hard and bitter peace with Germany—"hang the Kaiser and make the Germans pay the cost of the war"—and won a sweeping victory. And while President Wilson was in England making his great speeches at Manchester and elsewhere, in which he set forth with new power his programme for the peace and the League of Nations, Clemenceau was telling the Chamber of Deputies at Paris that he still believed in the old-fashioned system of alliances. Although both he and Lloyd George had accepted fully the President's basis of settlement, the Fourteen Points, Lloyd

George was now for making Germany pay to the "last shilling," and notable French leaders were advancing territorial and other claims which, if granted, would defeat the very principles to which the Allies had agreed at the Armistice.

Of course there was a reason for this popular reaction of which the political leaders were so keenly aware. The French, especially, had suffered frightfully during four years of war, had lost millions of men killed and wounded, had seen some of their fairest provinces devastated with a ruthlessness never known in any former war, and now that the war had resulted in victory each man wanted immediate satisfaction. As Clemenceau said in one of the early meetings of the Peace Conference:

The first wish of the French frontier peasants had been to get back the cattle which had been stolen from them by the hundred and by the thousand, and which they could watch grazing on the German side. These peasants kept saying, "We have been victorious, of course, but cannot the Germans be asked to give us back our cattle?"

. . . Mr. Balfour would not, as a philosopher, contradict him when he said that there was such a thing as a philosophy of war, when events accumulated in the human brain and put it out of gear, destroying the balance of entire nations.<sup>1</sup>

Such events had accumulated, and in these days entire nations were indeed out of balance!

How was it in America? Exactly the same reaction had here set in. In spite of criticisms by Roosevelt, Lodge, and other opposition leaders, Wilson undoubtedly had the powerful and nearly united support of America until the fall of 1918—and this in spite of the fact that his policies, all through his Administration, had been antagonistic to what may be called the conservative interests in the country. His programme of legislation was

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 12.

felt by these groups to be unduly favourable to labour, to the farmer, and to the small business man against the great business man. In November, 1918, when the elections went against his party and the people returned a Congress opposed to him, all the voices of opposition broke out with a new force.

While the President was saying in Europe that the United States wanted nothing for herself—"We have no selfish ends to serve"—Senator Lodge was declaring in Senate (speech of December 21) that there must be heavy indemnities paid by Germany (although the agreement in the Armistice was that only reparations, not indemnities, were to be paid), and that "in these indemnities the United States must have its proper and proportional share." And while the President was voicing strongly his vision of the American nation serving the world and taking its part in a league of nations, Senator Johnson and Senator Borah were asking Americans to take council of their fears, preserve their isolation, and leave the nations of Europe to their own devices.

"I hope," said Senator Johnson, "that out of it will come a determination on the part of the Senate and the Government of the United States to leave to the nations beyond the seas the policing of the world hereafter, and to bring home our troops wherever they may be as soon as our present obligations shall have been fulfilled."

And Senator Borah opposed the bill to provide \$100,000,000 for feeding the hungry people of Europe because Mr. Hoover's work had been "carried out without thought for the interests of American taxpayers."

It was thus that Wilson's idea of "humanity first," this vision of America as a great servant of the world, began to be superseded by the new slogan, "America first."

In spite of all this the President still felt with all the

intensity of his faith that he was truly voicing the real longings and aspirations of the people of the world, that he really had the people with him, and that if opposition appeared he had only to speak to them and they would rise to his support. He had an almost pathetic belief in the people and in America. In one of the greatest speeches he made in Europe, that at the Sorbonne at Paris, January 25, 1919 (ten days after the Peace Conference opened), he expressed again his belief that

the select classes of mankind are no longer the governors of mankind. The fortunes of mankind are now in the hands of the plain people of the whole world. Satisfy them and you have justified their confidence not only, but have established peace. Fail to satisfy them, and no arrangement that you can make will either set up or steady the peace of the world.

He also felt that the people, the "plain people," of the United States were also with him.

You can imagine [he says in the same address] the sentiments and the purpose with which the representatives of the United States support this great project for a league of nations. We regard it as the keynote of the whole, which expresses our purposes and ideals in this war and which the associated nations have accepted as the basis of a settlement.

If we return to the United States without having made every effort in our power to realize this programme, we should return to meet the merited scorn of our fellow citizens. For they are a body that constitute a great democracy. They expect their leaders to speak, their representatives to be their servants.

It would be a mistake to think that Wilson was not aware of the struggle before him. He said as far back as July, 1917: "Peace cannot be had without concession and sacrifice." And in the notable conference which he held with the American experts on the *George Washington*

during the first voyage from America, he not only expressed his anticipation of future difficulties, but declared with great force his determination to face "a task of terrible proportions."

Anticipating the difficulties of the Conference in view of the suggestion he has made respecting the desires of the people of the world for a new order, he remarked: "If it won't work, it must be made to work," because the world was faced by a task of terrible proportions, and only the adoption of a cleansing process would recreate or regenerate the world. The poison of Bolshevism was accepted readily because "it is a protest against the way in which the world has worked." It was to be our business at the Peace Conference to fight for a new order, "agreeably if we can, disagreeably if we must."<sup>1</sup>

But he had such a profound faith in the power of moral ideas and in the willingness of the "plain people" to do right, once they knew what the right was—and had not the whole world accepted his principles as the basis of the peace?—that he went into the Peace Conference with unabated confidence. In any event and no matter what the opposition, he was prepared to make the fight.

This spirit was what the people of Europe so clearly sensed. He "meant it terribly." And of all the leaders there, he was, by virtue of the American system of electing a President for a specific term of years, the only one free from fierce momentary waves of popular feeling. Lloyd George had out-Wilsoned Wilson in his application of the idea of self-determination in January, 1918—for it was then the winning slogan of the world—but in December, 1918, he was contesting an election on a very different slogan! But the President had laid down his principles: and stood upon them. "It is our business at the Peace Conference," he had said, "to fight for a

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<sup>1</sup>From notes taken at the time by Dr. Isaiah Bowman.

new order, agreeably if we can, disagreeably if we must."

Mr. Balfour, who beyond any other man who played a great part in the Peace Conference was able to maintain the somewhat ironical view of a detached observer of events, remarked on November 28:

It is going to be a rough-and-tumble affair, this Peace Conference!

PART II

THE OLD AND THE NEW DIPLOMACY:  
ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE



## CHAPTER VI

### ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION OF THE "NEW DIPLOMACY" TO MEET THE OLD—THE AMERICAN "INQUIRY"—THE ORIGIN OF PRESIDENT WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS

FROM the great day on which the curtain rang down upon the vast grim drama of the war (November 11, 1918) until it went up on the drama of the Peace Conference at Paris (January 12, 1919) two full months elapsed. President Wilson had arrived in Europe on December 13, ready and expecting to begin the conferences at once, or within a few days—and a month slipped away.

To the impatient publics of the world, suffering for peace, this delay may have seemed empty and barren enough; but it was packed with intention, and to a notable extent the entire course of the Peace Conference was determined at the Armistice and during these preparatory months.

A certain delay, possibly a month, was, of course, reasonable and inevitable. This was a world peace. Arrangements had to be made in twenty-seven allied nations, delegations had to come half around the world from Japan, China, Australia, South Africa, South America, India. A month was evidently the period envisaged when the Armistice was signed; the limit for fulfilment of the terms in every case (except one) was fixed at thirty-one days (one was thirty-six days). Mr. Lloyd George, who had gone to the country for a stronger

mandate for his policies at Paris, had set the British general election for December 14. Thus Lloyd George had his political campaign out of the way. President Wilson was in Europe ready to begin, and the liberal and radical press in England and France had already begun to complain sharply of the delay.

Now, nothing is ever uncalculated in diplomacy, and delay, which always favours the thing that is, has ever been one of the stock weapons in that warfare. If the diplomats, and especially the French, who were acting as hosts of the Conference and who were thus chiefly responsible for determining such matters of procedure—they must say when their house was ready and in order—had desired or thought it in their interest to speed up the Peace Conference, it could and would have been done. But they evidently calculated that delay, up to a certain point, worked to their advantage. By putting off as long as possible the demobilization of the most formidable army ever known, which was under the command of a French general—Marshal Foch—it made doubly sure the realities of the defeat of the Central Powers, and with the blockade which was still maintained by the most powerful fleet that ever sailed the seas, it held Germany in a grip of steel, while she crumbled into political and economic dissolution. Even at this period the course of the world was being steered by the compass of French fear.

Moreover, the allied diplomats were well satisfied to wait until they had secured the last grain of advantage under the most drastic armistice terms known to modern war. While President Wilson had indeed laid down the principles of the peace, the military men, who were then efficiently in control, had made the terms of the Armistice, and the Armistice was in effect a preliminary imposed

treaty in which not only the usual and immediate military and naval terms were prescribed, but in broad outline many of the boundaries which were subsequently to be demanded, and even financial and economic provisions were added. President Wilson was thus partly defeated by the military men—or at least his task made more difficult—before he arrived in Europe. During the weeks of delay in December and January the French were making good the physical possession of Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar coal fields, and the Rhine frontier. The Italians, too, were in territories claimed under the secret treaty of London. They thus put themselves, under the Armistice, in a powerful position to approach the peace deliberations. They had won the nine points of possession.

Moreover, the leaders of Europe were well aware of the reaction of public opinion in the world, now that the emotional strain of the war was over, as was shown in the last chapter, "The Slump in Idealism." Lloyd George had played upon it and catered to it in his election in December; Clemenceau had set it forth with almost brutal frankness in speeches in the French Chamber. President Wilson could go about Europe making speeches, reiterating his programme; he would be warmly cheered by the more liberal or radical groups of the populations, but the control of affairs was again firmly in the hands of the old leaders and they knew that the tide was, at least temporarily, setting against the President, against his broad programme of a peace of justice and toward the hard, bitter, retributive peace which the French and Italians and, to a far lesser degree, the British desired. Delay, therefore, tended on the one hand to strengthen the old leaders and give new force to traditional methods which were known and had worked, however badly, in the past, while on the other hand it tended to weaken the new

American leadership and confuse its programme which, faced now with a chaotic and suffering world, seemed remote and difficult of achievement.

In short, if the old diplomacy, the old order, had had the shock of its life during the last months of the war, when President Wilson became the accepted world leader, it now had its innings. Beginning with the Armistice everything began to go its way, and this continued straight through to the mighty battles of the early days of the Conference itself.

There is every evidence that the old leaders expected to carry things through with a high hand. It must not be forgotten that they were committed to one another by many secret treaties, then largely unknown to the Americans; they were so confident during this two-month interim that they were continuing the secret conferences among themselves concerning, for example, the partition of Turkey. But they failed to take account of a number of new factors which were entering powerfully, for the first time, into international affairs. It was a sheer failure on their part in imagination (most of the failures at Paris were failures in imagination), for they did not see—they never saw nor felt—as President Wilson did, the new world they lived in and the new forces that were irresistibly rising there and which, if momentarily obscured, were soon to exert themselves strongly in the Peace Conference.

Let us for a moment glance at the forces of the “new order” which were marshalling at Paris. If its organization was undeveloped it had behind it a vast more or less inarticulate public opinion. If it had not traditions it had principles and aspirations; if few trained leaders, a prophet.

Paris was as different from Vienna as the Battle of the

Argonne was different from the Battle of Waterloo. It flew, it ran by electricity! What was said or done at Vienna reached London a week later—post riders, stage coaches, sailing vessels—and penetrated even then little beyond the charmed circle of the governmental classes; but what was done at Paris—and when all is said, Paris, compared with Vienna, was wide open to the world—was read the next morning in the cafés of Melbourne and Cape Town, or by rickshawmen, from the smudgy newsprints of Tokio. From the huge wireless tower at Bordeaux, then in process of completion by the American Navy, news could be flashed simultaneously to San Francisco, Bombay, and Buenos Aires—or the operators could pick up their own messages around the world in the seventh of a second.

At Vienna, a hundred years ago, they danced their way to peace. "The emperors danced, the kings danced, Metternich dances, Castlereagh dances. Only the Prince de Talleyrand does not dance"—having a club foot. "He plays whist." They danced for fifteen months. . But in Paris in 1919 no one danced. At Paris they worked. It was a conference hard-driven by the lash of events. I can never at all get the pleasing picture, so dramatically presented by more than one commentator, of Four Olympians dominating the course of the world. I can recall only the groups of hard-pressed and harried human beings—the Four the most of any—struggling with tasks too great for them, and smarting under the unrelenting attacks of a public opinion that was vastly different and far more alert than it was in 1815. .

No, they did not dance at Paris. Either there was less suffering after the Napoleonic wars, or else the world since then has grown more sensitive to human needs and human hopes. Or probably those who suffer most of

all from the war have in that century grown less submissive, more articulate. For one remembers vividly how the councils at Paris were given no rest, day or night, from hearing the woes of the world: how they were constantly agitated by cries of hunger from without, coming up from Vienna or Armenia or Russia, or alarmed by the noises of new wars broken out in Poland or the Balkans or distracted by the fierce uprisings of peoples, as in Hungary, too miserable, cold, hungry, hopeless, to await the orderly processes of the peace. And at all times, at every turn of the negotiations, there rose the spectre of chaos, like a black cloud out of the east, threatening to overwhelm and swallow up the world. There was no Russia knocking at the gates of Vienna! At Vienna, apparently, the revolution was securely behind them; at Paris it was always with them. The "new order" was crowded always toward the old by a newer.

It may not have been a wiser world, a better world, a kindlier world that was dramatized there upon the great stage of Paris (that question is for the philosopher rather than the historian), but it was immensely more complicated than the world of Vienna, more crowded, more restless, more intensely self-conscious, better engineered, with more mechanisms for the annihilation of space and time. While the Peace Conference was sitting at Paris it was considered nothing at all for members of the British delegation to hop to London by airplane of an afternoon for tea; and in June of that year bold young Read of the American Navy conquered for the first time the passage by air of the stormy Atlantic and called upon the President scarcely four days from American soil. Oh, it was a time of miracles—mechanical miracles, at least—those months at Paris!

Only as we visualize these things, these new forces come

into the world, can we arrive at an adequate understanding of what happened at Paris. Mechanical invention had changed the whole world since Vienna, it had forced men into irritable contact as never before; popular education had awakened the under groups of the people to a new self-consciousness; a popular press and world-wide cheap communication had laid the foundations of a new world public opinion. And this public opinion was capable at a moment of high exaltation, during the last years of the war, of being led and inspired as President Wilson led and inspired it, in behalf of the highest and noblest principles. It could even force the hands of the old order, and lay down the principles of a peace not based upon fear or ambition or greed or revenge, but upon justice and liberty and coöperative effort. No one more clearly saw and felt the possibilities of the power so exerted in those great last years of the war than President Wilson. Again and again he refers to the power of people as contrasted with governments, thinks of himself as the representative of a people rather than of a government, warms to the vision of a new order based upon the will—the good-will—of the people.

"Gentlemen," he said at the Peace Conference, "the select classes of mankind are no longer the governors of mankind. The fortunes of mankind are now in the hands of the plain people of the whole world. Satisfy them and you have justified their confidence not only, but established peace. Fail to satisfy them, and no arrangement that you can make will either set up or steady the peace of the world."<sup>1</sup>

He had thus a passionate faith in the people—in the higher nature of the people!

But this public opinion was also capable of powerful

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, Plenary Session, January 25.

revulsions of feeling, like that which occurred after the Armistice. Nevertheless, the great, the permanent, the important fact lies not in the position that it took at any given time, but in the fact that it existed, that it had, at last, become a living force.

At the time of the Armistice Wilson was what might be called the majority leader of this world public opinion. He dominated the situation, he laid down the world policies. But at the Peace Conference he was the leader of the opposition, a powerful opposition, but undoubtedly a minority.

The older order was better prepared, better organized than the new, but the new forces in the world were not without organization or powerful representation at Paris, and they were the forces which President Wilson had with him. In a real sense the preparation for the Paris Conference was based upon the supposition that it would be a new kind of peace. Most of it was made while the world was still under the spell of the President's leadership—before the reaction came—and the commissions came to Paris expecting to carry out the President's accepted points and principles.

When Lord Castlereagh went to Vienna in 1815 as representative of the British Government he took with him a staff of fourteen men. It was enough. It was enough to make the kind of closet peace they intended to make. The people were not concerned.

But the preparations for Paris assumed that the people of all the world would be represented there, and they were. The British delegation at Paris, in contrast to that at Vienna, filled five hotels. As for America, there were at one time 1,300 persons in the personnel of the American delegation (including army officers and soldiers assigned to service in various departments of the com-

mission), and they occupied a place and performed a service curiously underestimated in connection with the peace-making. Besides these officials connected with the American Commission there were always at Paris various independent delegations, often most influential, representing every stratum of American society, every kind of American interest—Irish, Jews, Negroes, women, peace associations, relief associations, farmers' organizations, various business interests, to say nothing of a large corps of newspaper correspondents and other writers (we had at one time over one hundred and fifty accredited correspondents upon our lists at Paris), photographers, historians, artists. The Commission itself occupied an entire hotel—the Crillon—and overflowed in several other buildings, and even then some of the delegates, notably those connected with the economic and financial commissions, occupied apartments in other hotels. The President had his own house, and Mr. Hoover and his staff also occupied a separate apartment.

Interests never in the least visualized at Vienna were vitally active at Paris. Economic interests and the world struggle for the raw materials of industry were represented there, and with a power behind them that Talleyrand and Castlereagh could never have imagined possible. For if the old order was best represented by the Soldier and the Diplomat, the new is best represented by the Worker, using that term in its widest sense to represent the economic activities of the world—those who thrive in peace. There was no Supreme Economic Council at Vienna (though commerce and finance, of course, were represented), but one half of the Treaty of Versailles is made up of economic provisions. Organized labour also was there, and strong enough to demand and obtain a place in the Councils; women were there (shades

of Vienna!) and strange submerged racial minorities from every part of the earth were there—Jews from Poland and Palestine and America, Negroes from our own South, Arabs from their desert retreats, Koreans, Persians, Egyptians, and denizens of old Mount Lebanon, where King Solomon cut the cedars for his temple. And all broad awake.

One wonders what those dancing delegates at Vienna would have thought of having to receive and consider the needs or rights or ambitions of Arabs and Indians and Jews and Negroes—and workers—and women!

Indeed, the work of the Commission was organized upon the initial assumption that it was a great public undertaking, that it would have to keep open the avenues of communication with the people of all the world and provide means of present and future publicity. That very assumption was a new thing in the world. It was so new that it was not, alas, acted upon to the extent it might have been!

Thus, the American Commission had its own courier service, reaching all over western Europe, and indeed to America, with forty-two officers employed. It had to be in instant touch with the affairs of the world—just as the British were, or the French, for here, too, applied the rules of competitive preparation. Even with this equipment our courier service was not equal to that of the British Empire.

We had our own hard-working printing plant, handling the considerable printing necessities of the Commission, and issuing, for a time, a daily summary of information. We had our own post offices and postal service, connected up with the army system, as well as with the postal service in America. We had a department of photography and of history to make the record of the work done. We

had a transportation section. Fifty-two army motor cars were set aside for the use of the Commission; and, finally, we had our own American telephone and telegraph system quite independent from the French, connecting all the local offices in Paris and indeed reaching many cities in western Europe. From any office in the Hotel Crillon it was possible at any time to call, by long-distance American wires, London, Liverpool, Coblenz, Brest, Bordeaux, and, later, Brussels. American girl operators had charge of the various centrals. A lead-covered telephone circuit, running through the great conduits of Paris, built by the American service, connected President Wilson's house with the Hotel Crillon, enabling the President to reach any commissioner or adviser upon short notice. There were American telegraph instruments clicking and American telephones ringing just behind the glass walls in the Hall of Mirrors of the ancient palace of Louis the XIV at Versailles while the Peace was being signed. There is a not unthrilling story yet untold of how the Americans laid their wires through those old walls. But try as they would, the Americans never got a telephone into the sacred precincts of the French Foreign Office.

All this modern organization and equipment constituted a complete service, costing, for the period of the Conference, according to the report made by the President to Congress, August 28, 1919, upward of \$1,500,000. And yet it was only keeping pace with what the other great Powers were doing. The British Empire had in certain departments a larger personnel; and the French, being in their own capital city, had the advantages of a national equipment beyond the reach of any other nation. The Italians and the Belgians both occupied entire hotels and had considerable staffs. Even the smaller or more distant States—Greece, Poland, the Jugoslavs, the Czechoslovaks,

the Hedjaz, Japan, and China—had more or less extensive headquarters and official advisers.

But while all these things represent the modern spirit and modern facilities, the most important and significant development at Paris was the presence of expert advisers and scientists; and the effort there made to base the settlements not upon caprice, or force, or greed, or fear, but upon exact knowledge. For if there is anything that is hostile, at every point, to the crude, deceptive, and destructive methods of the old military and diplomatic régime, it is the spirit of modern inquiry. There was thus a completeness and accuracy of knowledge of the entire earth, its people and its resources available at Paris that was utterly beyond the imagination or the capacity of the Vienna of 1815.

The Congress of Vienna, indeed in its Statistical Commission, had the beginnings of an expert service, but it was limited to statistics of population, the counting of heads being then the basis adopted in making territorial adjustments. At Vienna "the people existed only to be trafficked in." But long before the great war closed it was recognized by all the great nations that scientific knowledge would play an unprecedented part in the coming Peace Conference, and especially if the settlements were to be based upon broad general principles such as those laid down by President Wilson.

A peace of the old kind could be patched up by the diplomats, but a peace of the new kind required immense and accurate scientific knowledge. For this reason each of the great nations appointed committees of inquiry, that of the United States being organized in September, 1917, by Colonel Edward M. House, with its headquarters in the building of the American Geographical Society in New York, whose Secretary, Dr. Isaiah Bowman, served

as executive officer. Dr. S. E. Mezes was its general director. At one time the personnel of the inquiry numbered about one hundred and fifty persons. It brought together a notable group of historians, geographers, statisticians, ethnologists, economists, and students of government and international law. Huge cases, amounting to carloads of books, maps, and reports, were taken to Paris with the President's party on the *George Washington*. These specialists and their assistants and staffs, numbering several hundred, were in three general groups—the economic advisers, the advisers on international law, and the territorial and ethnographical experts. There were also connected with the Commission, drawn from the United States Army and Navy, competent advisers on military, naval, and air problems, and the delicate questions of the control of international communication by cables and wireless.

The British and French also had extensive inquiries at work long before the war closed, and were served by considerable staffs of experts. The French had two commissions, one a *comité d'études*, headed by Professor Ernest Lavisse, and the other by Senator Jean Morel. In Great Britain studies were made by the General Staff, the Admiralty, and the War Trade Board. Two considerable series of handbooks were published by the British, one edited by Professor Henry N. Dickson of the Naval Intelligence Division, and the other by Sir George Prothero of the historical section of the Foreign Office.

The American Inquiry was of great service to the President in formulating, not his general principles of the peace, but the application of them to certain of the specific problems.

Of course the ideas underlying all of the points were rooted deeply in many of the utterances in his speeches

during the earlier years of the war. For example, in his speech of January 27, 1917, he said:

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed; that freedom of the seas which our ancestors have urged, and that moderation of armament which makes armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or selfish violence.

Careful studies of the various territorial settlements were made by the Committee of the Inquiry with these principles in mind, and early in January, 1918, a report, requested by the President, was made by Dr. S. E. Mezes, David Hunter Miller, and Walter Lippmann. Six of his Fourteen Points, the territorial points, were directly framed upon this report.<sup>1</sup> The President worked out his statement in each case in stenographic notes upon the margins of the manuscript. It may be interesting to trace the exact development of one of these points; for example, that relating to Poland.

The conclusion of the Committee of Inquiry regarding Poland is as follows: "An independent and democratic Poland shall be established. Its boundaries shall be based on a fair balance of national and economic considerations, giving due weight to the necessity for adequate access to the sea. The form of Poland's government and its economic and political relations should be left to the determination of the people of Poland, acting through their chosen representatives."

On the margin of this statement the President made the following memorandum in stenographic notes:

An independent Polish State must be established, whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity shall be guaranteed by international covenant. It shall include the territories inhabited by an indisputably Polish population, and shall be granted a free and secure access to the sea.

<sup>1</sup>See Document 2, Volume III for this basic report, with President Wilson's notes.

The Present Situation: Page thirty

THE BALKANS. NO JUST OR LASTING SETTLEMENT  
OF THE TANGLED PROBLEMS CONFRONTING  
THE DEEPLY WRONGED PEOPLES OF THE BAL-  
KANS CAN BE BASED UPON THE ARBITRARY  
TREATY OF BUCHAREST. THAT TREATY WAS  
A PRODUCT OF <sup>THE</sup> EVIL DIPLOMACY WHICH  
THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD ARE NOW DETER-  
MINED TO END. THAT TREATY WRONGED EVERY  
NATION IN THE BALKANS, EVEN THOSE WHICH  
IT APPEARED TO FAVOR, BY IMPOSING UPON  
THEM ALL THE PERMANENT MENAGE OF WAR. IT  
UNQUESTIONABLY TOOK MEN AND WOMEN OF BUL-  
GARIAN LOYALTY FROM THEIR NATURAL ALLEGI-  
ANCE. IT DENIED TO SERBIA THAT ACCESS  
TO THE SEA WHICH SHE MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO  
COMPLETE HER INDEPENDENCE. ANY JUST  
SETTLEMENT MUST OF COURSE BEGIN WITH THE  
EVACUATION OF RUMANIA, SERBIA, AND MONTE-  
NEGRO BY THE ARMIES OF THE CENTRAL POWERS,  
AND THE RESTORATION OF SERBIA AND MONTE-  
NEGRO. THE ULTIMATE RELATIONSHIP OF THE.

2.2 ~ ~  
4.4 ~ ~  
2.2 ~ ~  
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Facsimile of Page 30 of Inquiry Report with President Wilson's notes in stenography on the margin, showing how he worked out Point XIII of the XIV

In its final form it becomes Point XIII of the Fourteen Points, as follows:

An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose

political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.<sup>1</sup>

Consider now the new way of making the peace, as indicated by these preparations as contrasted with the old. The old way was for a group of diplomats, each representing a set of selfish national interests, to hold secret meetings, and by jockeying, trading, forming private rings and combinations with one another, come at last to a settlement that was to be maintained by treaties (often secret treaties) and balances of power based upon military force.

The new way so boldly launched at Paris (so ineffectively carried out!) was, first, to start with certain general principles of justice, such as those laid down by President Wilson and accepted by all the world; and, second, to have those principles applied, not by diplomats and politicians each eager to serve his own interests, but by dispassionate scientists—geographers, ethnologists, economists—who had made studies of the problems involved. It has often been charged that Wilson had no programme: this *was* his programme.

The principles were before the world and had been generally accepted by it. The same specialists of the Inquiry who had aided Wilson in their formulation were accompanying him to Europe to assist in their application. The hold of the *George Washington* was crammed with the materials for scientific research on all the problems of the peace. And after their arrival at Paris, the American experts, at Wilson's direction, outlined their views of a territorial settlement in accordance with the President's principles in the "Black Book," distributed to the plenipotentiaries in January.

<sup>1</sup>See the Fourteen Points, Document 8, Volume III.

This was the American method, and it was more possible for America to practise it than for other nations because she had so few material interests to serve. It was preëminently President Wilson's method, and he used it, or endeavoured to use it, at every turn.

He saw in it the only calm, safe, sure basis upon which the peace could be made to rest; the only thing that would take it out of the realm of immediate passion, ambition, and fear. While on the way across the Atlantic on the *George Washington* the President said to the specialists of the Commission:

Tell me what is right and I will fight for it. Give me a guaranteed position.<sup>1</sup>

No other delegation at Paris leaned so heavily upon its scientific advisers as the American, for none so desired the truth of the matter stripped of all immediate political or strategic interests, and this applied especially to the President.

On February 12, in the Council of Ten, we find the President giving his testimony to his dependence upon the experts of the American Commission:

President WILSON said that M. Clemenceau had paid him an undeserved compliment. In technical matters most of the brains he used were borrowed; the possessors of these brains were in Paris.

Dean Charles H. Haskins of Harvard University, one of the territorial specialists at Paris, has said:

Certainly none of the chief delegates was more eager for the facts of the case than was the President of the United States, and none was able to assimilate them more quickly or use them more efficiently in the discussion of territorial problems.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Notes made at the time by Dr. Isaiah Bowman.

<sup>2</sup>"Some Problems of the Peace Conference," by C. H. Haskins and R. H. Lord, p. 31.

As to the President's dependence upon the experts of the Commission, Thomas W. Lamont, one of the economic advisers, says:

I never saw a man more ready and anxious to consult than he. . . . Again and again would he say to Mr. Lloyd George or M. Clemenceau: "My expert here, Mr. So-and-So, tells me such-and-such, and I believe he is right. You will have to argue with him if you want to get me to change my opinion."<sup>1</sup>

Criticism has been levelled at the President, as by Mr. Lansing, for not "taking council." Undoubtedly he did not take his own commissioners into consultation as much as he should have done; he is too much the solitary worker; he delegates authority with difficulty; he has too little appreciation of the need of explanation, conference, team play, the human lubricants; but Mr. Lansing was a type of many men at the Conference who were forever giving the President opinions, or urging upon him points of view or principles quite different from his own, when he wanted facts, knowledge, information. He had thought out his general principles and set his course; they were of the very warp and woof of his life. They were his faith. They were his religion. And they were unchangeable so far as he was concerned. He did not, then, desire other principles or opinions (Mr. Lansing wanted him to base the peace primarily upon legal principles, while he was determined that it should be based primarily upon moral principles), but he did desire, and eagerly seek, information, facts, all the light he could get to apply the principles which he had set forth and all the world had accepted as the basis of the peace. If he was adamant in his general principles, he was the humblest of men before the facts.

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<sup>1</sup>"What Really Happened at Paris," edited by E. M. House and Charles Seymour, p. 278.

Mr. Lansing, of course, was as fully entitled to his own principles, his faith, as the President; but finding that they were in fundamental disagreement, for example, in the matter of "self-determination," as he confides secretly to his diary,<sup>1</sup> it was his duty to resign; for the responsibility of the peace rested not upon him but upon the President.

Such was the organization and intent of the new order at Paris, and such the leadership. Before describing the actual struggle with the old, which had been having everything its own way since the Armistice, one other aspect of the new world at Paris—perhaps the most important of all—must be fully presented. This was the representation at Paris of the public opinion of the world by its unofficial ambassadors: the press; in short, the whole great new problem of publicity and secrecy.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Peace Negotiations," by Robert Lansing, p. 97.

## CHAPTER VII

### PUBLICITY AND SECRECY AT PARIS—INSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN PRESS BUREAU—ORGANIZATION OF COR- RESPONDENTS—DEVELOPMENT OF SOURCES OF NEWS

ONE fact stands out at the Paris Peace Conference as distinctive and determining: the fact that the people of the world, publics, were there represented and organized as never before at any peace conference. At the older congresses, the diplomats occupied the entire stage, bargained, arranged, and secretly agreed; but at Paris democracy, like the blind god in Dunsany's play, itself comes lumbering roughly, powerfully, out upon the stage.

In many ways the most powerful and least considered group of men at Paris were the newspaper correspondents—we had one hundred and fifty of them from America alone. I heard them called “ambassadors of public opinion.” Here they were with rich and powerful news associations or newspapers or magazines behind them, and with instant communication available to every part of the world. Since Vienna in 1815, since Verona in 1822, when the great Powers agreed secretly to suppress the liberty of the press because “it is the most powerful means used by the pretended supporters of the rights of nations to the detriment of those of Princes”—since those old times popular education, universal suffrage, a cheap press, and easy communication had utterly changed the world.

At Paris these ambassadors of public opinion—at least

those from America—had come, not begging, but demanding. They sat at every doorway, they looked over every shoulder, they wanted every resolution and report and wanted it immediately. I shall never forget the delegation of American newspaper men, led by John Nevin, I saw come striding through that holy of holies, the French Foreign Office, demanding that they be admitted to the first general session of the Peace Conference. They horrified the upholders of the old methods, they desperately offended the ancient conventions, they were as rough and direct as democracy itself.

While there was a gesture of unconcern, of don't-care-what-they-say, on the part of some of the leaders, no aspect of the Conference in reality worried them more than the news, opinions, guesses, that went out by scores of thousands of words every night, and the reactions which came back so promptly from them. Unlike the Princes at Vienna a hundred years before, nearly every leader at Paris well knew that he was dependent upon a parliament, and back of that an electorate, that might shout at any moment, "Off with his head!" and that the judgment of that electorate was based upon what these aggressive ambassadors of public opinion were nightly putting out to the four winds from the wireless tower at Lyons, or sending by cable under the seas.

The diplomats at Paris were not only alarmed by the invasion of the public—especially the aggressive and powerful invasion of the American press—but puzzled, genuinely puzzled. They were just through with an ironclad censorship of the press which had lasted four years. Men like Balfour, trained in the old school, would have liked to find a new way, but did not know how and were afraid. The whole technique, indeed, of dealing with publics in the matter of foreign affairs was fire-new. There was no

background, no experience, to go by, except the grim traditions of a man like Sonnino of Italy, who was for plodding straight ahead oblivious of public opinion, according to the old methods of secret meetings, secret bargains, secret treaties. He was the only leader in Paris who seemed never to doubt.

How far was the public to be taken into the confidence of the delegates? How could the press be kept in the dark and yet remain docile enough to be used when needed? Was the press to be censored or controlled by the leaders in power or by the Foreign Office, as the French had tried to do it? Clemenceau had a dozen papers at Paris which would change their positions over night when he crooked his finger.

Should the press be shouldered peremptorily aside, as one group of Italians sought to do it, or dined and wined and spoon-fed with propaganda, as another Italian group tried to do it? Or should the press be treated as Lloyd George treated it, by flattering one group and fighting another? By knighting or raising friendly editors to the peerage and launching heated attacks in Parliament on the unfriendly editors—as, for example, upon the London *Times*—in which he called Lord Northcliffe a grasshopper? Or should the Wilson method, which was the polar opposite of the Lloyd George method, be adopted, of avoiding to the point of actual squeamishness any discrimination between newspapers or any attempt whatever either to influence or to attack them?

It may seem at first sight that the importance of the problem of secrecy and publicity at the Conference has here been exaggerated, but an examination of the minutes and documents gives astonishing evidence of the amount of time, anxiety, discussion, devoted to the consideration of what to do about public opinion and the press. The

effort began on the very first day to get at some standard, some method, which would meet the widely different conditions in different countries, and this continued throughout the Conference. It influenced the entire procedure, it was partly instrumental in driving the four heads of States finally into small secret conferences. The full achievement of publicity on one occasion—Wilson's Italian note—nearly broke up the Conference and overturned a Government. The bare threat of it upon other occasions changed the course of the discussion. As a matter of fact, nothing concerned the Conference more than what democracy was going to do with diplomacy.

Almost the first of President Wilson's official acts in connection with the Peace Conference, after his arrival, was to provide for an organization for publicity. During the war the Committee on Public Information, under George Creel's direction, had given publicity throughout the world to the purposes of America. It was frankly propagandist, it was a part of war, to which propaganda is as necessary as gunpowder. But the moment the war closed its function ceased, and Mr. Creel began winding up its affairs. On November 14, three days after the Armistice, announcement was made of the discontinuance of the voluntary censorship agreement under which the American press had loyally worked, and on November 15 all press censorship of cables and mails was discontinued. President Wilson was strongly in favour of putting the relationship of Government and press as quickly as possible upon a peace basis of absolute freedom.

Not only did the Government refrain from bringing any influence to bear upon publicity, but it made every effort to facilitate the passage of newspaper writers, of every shade of opinion, to France, throwing down all passport barriers and providing a ship, the *Orizaba*, for their free

transportation, and afterward, during the Conference, in order to relieve the congestion of the commercial cables, transmitting free, by arrangement with the French Government, and without any sort of censorship or discrimination between newspapers friendly to the Administration and those opposed to it, a large volume of press dispatches daily by wireless. While the press was thus intensely suspicious of Governmental influence upon its news or opinions, it was, at the same time, asking and receiving important material and mechanical assistance from the Government.

On December 13 President Wilson arrived in Europe accompanied, on the *George Washington*, by representatives of the three great press associations and closely followed by some eighty newspaper correspondents who had come by the *Orizaba* and other ships. There were thirty or forty American correspondents already in Paris, every one of them hungry for news. It was necessary to institute at once some channel for the information of these men and through them the public of America. On December 17, therefore, the President took the matter under advisement, consulting with Colonel House and Mr. Creel, and outlined his plan in a letter to each of the commissioners.<sup>1</sup>

The plan advanced two methods: one of direct access to the commissioners, though not to the President himself; the other a publicity organization to be headed by the writer, both aimed at giving the correspondents as much access and assistance as possible. It did not and could not, of course, provide admittance to the sessions of the Peace Conference itself, for that depended upon the future action of the allied delegates.

From this point onward the struggle for and against

<sup>1</sup>See Introduction, pages xxvii and xxviii of this volume, for full copy of this letter.

publicity at Paris—the whole new problem of how publics were to be informed of international affairs—developed in two broad channels: one inside the secret councils of the Peace Conference, the other outside among the powerful agencies of the press. Neither of these aspects of the Peace Conference, each of which reacted powerfully upon the other, has anywhere been adequately presented.

The forces outside the secret conferences will be considered first; these were the forces of attack, demanding wider publicity. What did they represent, how were they organized, and how did they carry on their campaign? After that we shall consider (in the next chapter) how the Peace Conference reacted as recorded in the Secret Minutes. The old diplomacy was distinctly upon the defensive and yielded every inch of ground with reluctance and bitterness, and finally dug itself in. The record here of America and of President Wilson is most important and significant.

There was never before anything like such a gathering of the forces of publicity from every part of the world. Conservatively estimated, at the height of the Conference five hundred writers were devoting their whole time to spreading abroad information and opinion as to what was happening—commending, criticizing, telling the truth, telling what was not the truth—shaping, in short, the opinion of the world. It was a formidable body of men and women, more powerful in certain ways than the delegates themselves.

Here were writers, not only from the so-called great Powers, but from China, Korea, India, Egypt, South America and, during a part of the period, writers from Germany and Austria. Most of the neutral countries were represented and often by exceedingly able men, like those from Holland. Every shade of opinion from con-

servative to radical was represented. There developed a kind of congress of the press—a conference of the ambassadors of public opinion—outside of the Peace Conference, which was of great value to all writers there, for profitable friendships were formed and mutual understandings of the utmost value developed.

If American writers, many of whom had in the beginning practically no background of knowledge of foreign affairs, especially benefited by these contacts, it is not too much to say that they infected correspondents from other countries with something of their aggressive spirit. One of the incidental but important results of the Paris Conference was the schooling of a large number of younger writers of all countries, who will be shaping the public opinion of the next quarter century in knowledge of world affairs and in the understanding of other peoples.

The French, with fine hospitality, had provided a gorgeous club, the Hotel Dufayel, in the Champs Élysées, which was a common meeting ground for the writers of all nations. They had hoped also to make it a common working place, but its social aspects were irresistibly uppermost, and the American correspondents particularly desired to be closer to the headquarters of the American Commission.

If the ghosts of those leaders at Vienna in 1815—Castlereagh and Talleyrand and the Tsar of Russia—could have dropped down into Paris, nothing would have surprised and scandalized them more than this extraordinary group of writers that could not be controlled, and they would have had trouble indeed in grasping, at all, the new world opinion that lay behind and supported these unofficial delegates. And finally it would have been utterly hopeless to make them understand how these men functioned, how the words they wrote to-night would be read to-morrow morning on the farther side of the globe.

It sometimes indeed came over the modern man at Paris—the sheer miracle of the thing. The writer sat in his office many evenings listening to the whir of the correspondents' typewriters and thinking of the waves of ideas, opinions, information, flowing outward through darkness and space with the speed of lightning, both through the air and under the seas, and of how these reports would be read in the morning in the subways of New York, or in Melbourne, or Cape Town, or Tokio; how they would build up, little by little, one way or another, that subtle but incalculably powerful new force, world public opinion. Here was the ganglion, the nerve centre of the Peace Conference, sending forth to humanity those impulses to action—wise action or unwise action—upon which rested the future of the world. It seemed to him at such times that nothing in the world was more important than the work of these men, that there was no graver task at Paris than that of keeping the channels freely open and the sources clear and true.

The mechanical problem of the Continental and even of the British press (the British correspondents used telephones extensively or could upon occasion hop home of an afternoon in a flying-machine) was comparatively simple; but that of the American, Asiatic, Australian, South African press was often difficult and complicated. The volume of news was enormous. According to the best available estimates American correspondents alone sent over by wireless and cables a good-sized volume, 70,000 or 80,000 words (often more) every day, to say nothing of an immense amount by mail.

At the beginning of the Peace Conference there were seventeen cables in existence between America and Europe, but only eight of them were in working condition, and these had to carry not only press dispatches, but all urgent

Government and military business, as well as a vast volume of commercial dispatches. Two of the three main lines of communication eastward with Asia were out of commission, owing to the war, so that these Atlantic lines westward had also to carry a heavy burden of traffic for Japan and the Far East. The result was a constant over-load and, during the latter part of the Conference especially, many delays.

Every effort was made by the United States Government to assist the newspapers in overcoming these mechanical difficulties. Walter S. Rogers, who had been with the Committee of Public Information and who was in charge of communications for the American Peace Commission, made arrangements with the French Government to send 9,000 words a day of press material from the wireless tower at Lyons. This service was generously performed by the French without charge to America. The allotment was divided as follows: Three thousand words were set apart for the text of routine documents, resolutions, reports, and speeches for the use of newspapers in America. By this method duplicate sending by the press associations and by the press correspondents was entirely avoided. The documents to be transmitted were designated by our Press Bureau, sent by courier to Mr. Rogers' office, thence to the wireless operators at Lyons, and thence to New York and distributed there to the press associations. Three thousand words more were divided, 1,000 words each, among the three American press associations—The Associated Press, The United Press, and the Universal Service—to be used as they saw fit. The remaining 3,000 words were divided between a score of special correspondents of great newspapers, some getting as low as 100 words a day.

Over 1,000,000 words were thus handled free during

the Conference for the American press in an effort to get more complete publicity. The amount of money expended by American newspapers, magazines, and press associations on cable tolls—let alone the costly business of sending to Paris and maintaining there a small army of men—must have run well into millions of dollars.

One of the greatest problems ever presented to the newspapers of the world was that of the transmission of the summary of the Treaty. As the Treaty neared completion we suddenly came to realize the immense bulk of it. It was nearly as long as a Dickens novel, and if put on the cables at any one time would swamp and disorganize the entire service for days. The writer discussed the matter fully with President Wilson, and even before it was decided by the Council of Four whether or not the Treaty itself should then be given out—a subject more fully discussed in the next chapter—he was directed to go ahead immediately with the preparation of a summary and authorized to secure from the various commissions all the drafts of clauses for insertion in the Treaty. The French, on their part, also began the preparation of a summary under the direction of M. Tardieu. The actual work on the part of America was in the hands of my assistant, Arthur Sweetser, and we coöperated fully with the British, who were represented by George Mair.

When the summary was first issued in America, it was attacked in the United States Senate as not being a faithful record of what was in the Treaty, but as a matter of fact the various paragraphs of it were most carefully prepared, often by the experts themselves who had drafted them, and, so far as I know, after comparison with the Treaty itself, there was never any further question of its accuracy.

This summary was about 14,000 words in length, and

the problem of transmitting it to various parts of the world in such a manner that newspapers of every nation would have a fair chance, and so that there would not be premature publication in any nation with the danger of a flash-back, say, from New York to London or London to Paris, was a most difficult one. If it were sent separately by the press associations or by each correspondent to his own newspaper the communication facilities of the world would be swamped for days and the total cost stupendous.

The writer called a meeting of the heads of the American, British, and French press, with the communication experts of each (Mr. Rogers for America) to meet at the Hotel Dufayel to discuss this matter. The technical problems were extremely difficult, but we agreed upon a method of dividing up the world so that the summary would reach every part of it with a single transmission.

We arranged that the United States should transmit the summary for North America, sending it by way of Canada, where it would be taken off for the Canadian press, thence on to New York for the American press. We also agreed to see that it was distributed for the West Coast of South America and to Japan and China. The British undertook to transmit it to their own possessions throughout the world—Australia, South Africa, and India—and to the East Coast of South America and the Scandinavian countries. The French, on their part, agreed to flash it broadcast, after due notification of the wave length to be used, from the great wireless tower of Lyons, where it could be picked up by all the wireless stations throughout Continental Europe. It was a feat never before attempted in the world and was a real example of the informal functioning of a league of nations, and all nations, allied and enemy, great and small, equally benefited.

When the summary was complete I took it up to Presi-

dent Wilson to secure his approval (for no one but the individual experts had seen a word of it), but he scarcely glanced at it, being then under an unbelievably heavy load of responsibility connected with the Conference itself. So I took the responsibility of sending it out as it was. It was, so far as I know, the longest single continuous cable dispatch ever sent up to that time. After it was off, we were under a great strain of anxiety for fear that someone would break over the agreement and the newspapers of some nation would secure an advantage over the others. But to our delight it went through exactly as planned, leaving Paris at 10 p. m. May 6, and was published simultaneously throughout the world on Thursday, May 8—the day after the Treaty itself was given to the German delegates.

Having this ambassadorial representation of the public at Paris, with a highly developed mechanical organization for spreading news throughout the whole world, how was it to be connected with the Peace Conference itself? How were the channels to be kept open between the representatives of the Governments of the world and the people of the world?

This was the very heart of the problem; here all the difficulties lay; and here, it must be confessed, there was partial failure, a consideration of the elements of which will be found highly illuminating.

Let us consider, first, the machinery and sources of information.

Offices were opened for the American Press Bureau only a few steps from the Crillon Hotel, the headquarters of our peace commission. It was at one of the famous street corners of the world—where the Rue Royale opens out into the broad Place de la Concorde—and it soon became one of the busiest offices of the commission. Every

one who wanted to reach Americans or American opinion—and who did not?—sooner or later found his way into our offices. An old red carpet which covered the floor when we came in was soon worn to shreds. Government typewriters, Government couriers, and Government messengers were provided, and everything was done to facilitate the work of the press representatives.

We considered it the function of the Press Bureau not in any way to influence opinion, but to serve and work on terms of the fullest coöperation with the correspondents. We became the channel for notices of meetings, for all official documents and reports. We bore up under a constant fire of pamphlets and propaganda from other countries. We had the highly difficult—gun-powdery!—problems to solve of press representation at plenary and other open sessions, where only a few press seats could be provided. A system of identification passes was instituted, and we had on our lists, during most of the Peace Conference, from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy writers. These included many representatives of the three powerful news associations, special correspondents of the thirty or forty principal newspapers of the United States, and writers for newspaper syndicates and magazines. No distinctions were made at any time between representatives of newspapers. We had with us not only the correspondents of the most powerful newspapers of New York, but of small radical and socialist newspapers, and several representatives from foreign language newspapers.

Soon after settling down in Paris the American press representatives—some of whom were veteran Washington correspondents with experience of the value of organization in the press galleries of Congress—met in the office of the Press Bureau and formed an association, and from

that time onward they not only decided many of the difficult problems of representation in the public meetings of the Peace Conference, the distribution of the wireless allotments provided by the Government, but they exercised an influence and pressure upon the Conference itself far more important than the public yet realizes. If it had not been for the energetic campaign of this American organization, as the secret records of the Peace Conference clearly reveal, there would have undoubtedly been far less access to the Conference than there was, and possibly no plenary sessions at all. President Wilson, as I shall show later, used the resolutions and demands of the American correspondents as a powerful weapon, within the councils, in his struggle for more publicity.

One of the greatest difficulties at first confronting most American journalists was a fundamental want of knowledge or background of international affairs. They had come from a country which had been traditionally isolated, with no great interests outside its own borders. Most of them spoke no language but English; some had never been abroad before, and yet they were now asked, in peril of their reputations, to write upon the most complicated and difficult network of questions known to men. A few American correspondents had been long in Europe and were as well acquainted with international affairs as most of the English and French writers, but to a large proportion of Americans at first—though they learned quickly—the conditions, problems, personalities, psychology, language were all new, and the handicap was great.

We had in the American Peace Commission, of course, a group of experts who had all this background information instantly available. I discussed with Mr. Lansing and Colonel House, and finally with the President, the advisability of securing access of correspondents to these

sources, but the problem presented many difficulties. The experts were busily engaged in the work of their commissions, and the task of going over the same ground with scores of correspondents was formidable.

I suggested, therefore, that as the various problems arose we should prepare under the direction of the Press Bureau a statement of the historical, geographical, and political elements involved in it by conference with the experts of the commission, this to be put out for use by the newspaper correspondents. This was at first strongly opposed by Mr. Lansing because he thought that such statements might involve us in diplomatic difficulties, but I took it up with President Wilson and explained to him that it was our intent to make a wholly unbiased statement of the facts, and that this would be of the greatest value to the correspondents. He at once approved the idea. Our first statement was on Poland and was written by Dr. R. H. Lord of Harvard University, who was the American expert on that subject. It was welcomed by the newspaper correspondents and even sent over by certain of them in full. This was the first of a long series of such statements. Not one of them (put out by our Bureau) was in any way propagandist. They were prepared solely for the information of correspondents.

So much for the formal machinery outlined in the President's original plan. The other source of information for correspondents suggested by the President—daily access to the Commissioners—proved in the beginning quite useful. Mr. Lansing was then sitting in the Council of Ten, and for a time all four of the Commissioners, including Colonel House, Mr. White, and General Bliss, received the correspondents, and the gathering of from twenty to fifty correspondents every morning in Secretary Lansing's large room in the Crillon Hotel was one of the notable

events of the day. Gradually, however, the attendance of the Commissioners dwindled away. Both General Bliss and Colonel House ceased appearing, and during all the latter part of the Conference the correspondents were received by Secretary Lansing or Mr. White, and the meetings yielded very little real news—they were indeed farcical—although the discussions that the correspondents often indulged in were of some value. Although Mr. Lansing, in his book on the Peace Conference, comments on the want of publicity at Paris, he was in practice one of the most difficult of men to approach, and, in connection with the commissions in which he was himself directly engaged, was the least communicative of any of the Commissioners.

Another source of information and discussion was the smaller gatherings of newspaper men who, during the latter part of the Conference, met Colonel House every day. Colonel House was not only more closely in touch with the President than any of the other Commissioners, but he had a genius for human contact and was constantly meeting the representative men from other delegations and receiving visitors from America who sought through him to reach the President, so that his conferences were always interesting, though, during the latter part of the Peace Conference, yielding little real news of what was going on in the Council of Four—for upon these things Colonel House was almost as little informed as the other Commissioners.

For a time the American correspondents were also received by members of foreign delegations, like Mr. Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil among the British, and M. Pichon among the French, and their own widening acquaintance and familiarity with conditions opened still

After the President returned from America in March and the Council of Four was instituted, access to really important information concerning what the heads of States were doing became still further blocked. A sharp protest arose among the press over this state of affairs. The writer took up the subject with the President and urged that some channel of regular information be opened, and it was finally arranged that the writer go up to his house, where the Council of Four was meeting, every day at 6 o'clock, and this practice, once begun, continued to the end of the Conference. I arrived usually just as the other members of the Council of Four were departing.

I have a vivid picture of Lloyd George coming out of the President's study, with his head thrown back and his gray hair ruffled with the excitements of the discussion, talking and often joking with Sir Maurice Hankey, who followed with his document file. Then would come Orlando with his secretary, M. Aldrovandi, and, usually last of all, Clemenceau, in his long black coat, making an impressive figure of solidity and power. With him came M. Mantoux, his secretary and interpreter. I would ordinarily find the President in his study, gathering up the papers of the day and putting them aside in his steel document box. Sometimes we would talk there in the study, and sometimes cross the hall into Mrs. Wilson's drawing room, which was always bright with flowers; and the President would go over the events of the day and afterward decide on what should be made public. There were days and days of endless controversy over such subjects as reparation, the disposition of the Saar Valley, the Polish question, with absolutely no decisions arrived at, and with nothing of salient news value to report.

Following this conference with the President I returned at once to the office of the Press Bureau and reported to

the correspondents everything that the President had authorized me to give out. Occasionally this news was of great importance, as on the day on which the Shantung decision was announced, but ordinarily the report was disappointing, because the proceedings of the Four were disappointing and inconclusive.

The more I saw of the Peace Conference the more I appreciated the difficulties which beset both the President and the American delegates generally in the matter of publicity. Conditions were so complicated and the interests and fears of the other nationalities were so acute as to make the problem of publicity an extremely delicate one.

The writer had an illuminating experience with this as a member of the Press Committee appointed on April 9 to handle the publicity for the Supreme Economic Council.

Our committee consisted of four representatives, one each from Great Britain, the United States, France, and Italy. All of the minutes and other information relating to the action of the Supreme Economic Council came into our hands. When the writer was appointed, he regarded it as a great opportunity to get out more real information on these important subjects to the American public; but from the very beginning difficulties of every kind arose. Important actions of the Supreme Economic Council, like plans for feeding the starving Austrians, came up. It seemed that this was most interesting and important news to transmit to America, helpful in building up the new feeling of coöperation and friendliness on which the peace must rest, but I found at once strong and not unreasonable objection from the Italians, supported by the French. The Italians feared the effect on their own public opinion of the news that the Austrians were being fed while their own people were in many cases close to the

point of suffering. The tendency was all in the direction of considering the effect of the news, not its value as information, and in those times of turmoil, with war still in the air, the effect might be most important.

Sometimes there were real military considerations involved, oftener diplomatic or political considerations. In any event, we usually parted, after hours of more or less fruitless discussion, with a report exceedingly general and vague in its terms.

What was to be done? If the American on the committee were to stand absolutely on his own principle of full publicity, either one of two things would happen: First, the committee would be discontinued, for the attitudes of the representatives there were fully supported by the men behind them on the Supreme Economic Council; or, second, the American representative would have to resign and some other method of publicity be devised. And in a conference of nations, the fundamental purpose of which was to come to an agreement and to set up a machinery for future agreement, could any one nation force its policy upon the others? Must there not be give and take? Was it not better to remain on the committee, constantly urging the American point of view and endeavouring to get all the publicity possible? It was thus, in this minute sphere of activity, that the problem that confronted the President, as well as all the other Americans at Paris, was clearly illustrated. In this particular case the writer remained upon the committee and did the best he could to get all the publicity possible.

It is easy, of course, to criticize the publicity methods at Paris, but the failure, if it was failure, was highly complicated. It must not be forgotten that the war was still only halted by a truce, and that many little conflicts, which might easily become greater, were going on all over Eu-

rope. War is secretive, and the fear and greed which lie behind war are secretive. The old diplomacy, with its tenacious traditions, was secretive, and the nations were entangled in a mesh of secret treaties. For more than four years the press had been strangled with a rigid censorship. It was a new thing for publics to be represented at such conferences at all; there were no standards, no technique. To ask complete frankness at that time was to ask that the world stop instantly being fearful, greedy, revengeful.

The struggle for publicity was thus a part of the struggle out of war into peace, out of the traditions of the old diplomacy into new methods, out of the conception of international dealings as the concern of a few autocratic heads of States toward a new conception of international dealings as the business of the people.

The attack thus went on from the outside; it also went on within the secret councils of the Ten and the Four, as I shall show in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PRESIDENT WILSON'S STRUGGLE FOR PUBLICITY—WITHIN THE SECRET COUNCILS—ATTITUDE OF FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN—PROBLEM OF PUBLICATION OF THE TREATY

THE first session of the Peace Conference (January 12) did not occur until two months after the Armistice and a month after President Wilson's arrival in Europe. By that time the press and public opinion of the whole world, and especially that of America, were on tip-toe with expectation. The writers at Paris had sent broadcast throughout the world an immense volume of preliminary material. They had exhausted their adjectives in describing the vast fanfare of celebrations with which the chief characters of the coming drama, especially President Wilson, had been welcomed upon the stage of Paris. They had pictured the matchless settings there by the Seine, the ancient dingy pile of the French Foreign Office on the Quai d'Orsay, where the chief scenes were to be enacted, not forgetting provocative glimpses at such stage properties as the secret double-doored conference rooms.

When these things began to wear out and the actual peace negotiations were still delayed, a vast wave of rumour, speculation, and prognostication began. No doubt the situation was over-dramatized, no doubt the expectations of a world full of suffering were raised to an unwarranted pitch.

Various elements entered into this immense develop-

ment of preliminary expectancy. The delay itself was perhaps the greatest single factor. Another was the fact, already commented upon, that most of the American correspondents at the beginning had too little background of knowledge of foreign affairs or of the history and traditions that lay behind every act in the drama. Too much emphasis was therefore given at first to the superficial, spectacular, and optimistic, and too little to the grave fundamental issues at stake. There was too much political drama, too little attention to deep-seated economic and financial problems. Everything was made to look too easy. The gathering conference was even written about as a kind of international circus staged for the amusement of the world, not as an assemblage—even a tragic assemblage—faced with problems too vast for it or any other group of men to solve, and yet forced to act, act, act, with every act affecting the destinies of mankind.

Still another important element of this world over-expectancy lay in the liberal interpretation of President Wilson's first point:

“Open covenants of peace openly arrived at.” . . .

It was assumed that “open covenants openly arrived at” meant that every process at every point would be wide open to public view. The President never meant that “the birth pains of the peace” should be utterly exposed, but his explanation, which he did his best to circulate, never overtook the impression made by this earlier pronouncement.

“When I pronounced for open diplomacy,” he wrote, June 12, 1918, in a memorandum for the United States Senate, “I meant, not that there should be no private discussions of delicate matters, but that no secret agreements should be entered into, and that all international relations, when fixed, should be open, above-board, and explicit.”

What he meant was the abolition of secret treaties, not of private discussions. Soon after the Conference began I asked the President, for my own guidance, as to his position regarding publicity.

"I am for all we can get," he said, "yet I must work with other men of other nations whose ideas of publicity are different from ours. We are at present merely comparing views, finding out where we stand. It is a kind of world cabinet meeting in which every member may express his real views freely. If we announced partial results, or one decision at a time, it might easily result in bloodshed. We must do nothing that will incite more war, we must do everything to get a speedy peace. When we reach real decisions everything must be made known to the world."

At other times the President compared the conferences to the Board of Directors of a corporation or the Executive Committee of a trade union, with private discussions but public decisions.

Whatever the complicated causes, however, it is a fact that by January 12, when those twenty-two men—four from America, four from Great Britain, three from Italy, and eleven from France—met for the first time there in the already famous council room in the Quai d'Orsay, the public interest, anxiety, and expectation had grown to enormous proportions. The curtain was at last to rise. A new heaven and a new earth were to be revealed.

And then the anticlimax! The curtain did not go up. At the close of the day a secretary, slipping apologetically, as it were, out from behind that curtain, told the audience in five dry lines what the actors had done. Here is what he said:

After the meeting of the Supreme War Council authorized to study the necessary conditions for the renewal of the Armistice, the repre-

sentatives of the Powers took up the examination of the procedure and the methods to be followed in the conversations to settle the preliminaries of the peace.<sup>1</sup>

It was the writer's function to be a kind of connecting link between the Council of Ten and the press. When the communiqué had been worked out at the Foreign Office I took it in hand and carried it at once to the correspondents gathered at the Press Bureau. I shall never forget the disappointment, exasperation, disgust, when that first communiqué was put out.

As a matter of fact, if every word uttered in that first conference had been made public it would have been regarded, on the whole, as a rather dull performance; the people of the world would probably have been disappointed, but they would have known, they would have understood. As the President remarked a day or so later while arguing in the Council for more publicity:

Mr. Wilson thought that what had transpired so far in these private sessions would not set the world on fire, even if it became public.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, there were powerful reasons within the Council for secrecy. In the first place, the war was not over; they were still dealing with armistice conditions, and war and secrecy are bound-brothers. It was probably a great mistake, from the point of view of the liberal forces at Paris, to mingle war matters and peace matters in the same conferences; it made for military methods and secret dealings. In the second place, there existed traditions, habits, and proprieties, of a vitality which the Americans never properly evaluated, which for centuries had hedged about diplomacy. A certain decorum, as of high

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 12.

<sup>2</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 15.

and recondite matters not understood by ordinary people, was to be preserved, and secrecy was of its very essence.

But there were far deeper and more potent reasons, as will be shown, for the secrecy at Paris than military danger or diplomatic tradition. The Americans might argue as they pleased for more publicity; the allied leaders knew that their purposes, as set forth in the secret treaties, would sooner or later have to be discussed. They knew also that there would be great difficulties with the restless, suspicious, and ambitious small Powers if all the cards were placed at once on the table.

The reaction after the first secret meeting of January 12, as I have said, was intense. Rumours everywhere began to fly about. It was whispered that a crisis with Germany had arisen (were not Marshal Foch and his Generals in attendance?) that there were explosive disagreements between Wilson and Clemenceau, that steps had been taken to crush Bolshevism, and finally, and more important than anything else, it was reported that the Conference had decided to meet wholly in secrecy and that the press was not even to be allowed to meet the delegates of the various commissions. Where nothing is known everything is distorted. Rumour grows like a mushroom in the dark. Great indignation began to be expressed by both American and British correspondents, the more so because it was evident that there had been a "careful leakage," as President Wilson once ironically called it, of certain news to the French press.

Immediately a great volume of red-hot comment on secrecy, "gag rule," "diplomacy in the dark," began to go across to America, and on January 14 the American correspondents met in the office of the Press Bureau and, after a heated session, drew up and signed the following communication to President Wilson:

Mr. President: The American press delegation in Paris has just been officially informed that the Peace Conference has adopted a rule whereby not only is the press barred from the current sessions, but is also excluded from personal contact with members of the several missions. We are also advised that all news of the sessions is to be limited to brief daily communiqués from the Secretariat, which may be followed by second-day statements in the nature of comment upon the minutes.

We direct your attention to the fact that this method, if followed, will limit our information to things accomplished. It will further prevent the publication of those matters not yet closed which the public demands the right to follow through to their consummation. Unless this right be granted, the public will be denied the opportunity to be informed of the positions assumed by the various elements within the Conference, and public opinion will thus have no chance to function in the way that you have always advocated and that you defined in the Fourteen Points.

Wherefore, we vigorously protest, on behalf of the American press representatives, against what we have every reason to regard as gag-rule; and in common with the action of our British colleagues, who have laid their case before the Prime Minister, we appeal to you for relief from this intolerable condition.

We stand where you stand: "Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at."

Respectfully,

ED. L. KEEN, *United Press*.

J. J. WILLIAMS, *Universal News Service*.

H. C. PROBERT, *Associated Press*.

ARTHUR B. KROCK, *Courier-Journal*.

JOHN EDWIN NEVIN.

H. B. SWOPE, *New York World*.

ARTHUR M. EVANS, *Chicago Tribune*.

RICHARD V. OULAHAN, *New York Times*.

LAURENCE HILLS, *New York Sun*.

BURR PRICE, *New York Herald*.

The writer handed this protest to President Wilson with a memorandum urging immediate action. At the same time a backfire began to come from America. Secretary

Tumulty cabled, January 13 and 16, regarding the unfavourable comments in the American press. He said in his cablegram of the 13th:

Situation could easily be remedied if you would occasionally call in the three press association correspondents who crossed on *George Washington* with you, merely giving them an understanding of the developments as they occur and asking them not to use information as coming from you, but merely for their own guidance.

On the 16th he cabled as follows to Rear-Admiral Grayson, the President's physician:

American newspapers filled with stories this morning of critical character about rule of secrecy adopted for Peace Conference, claiming that the first of the fourteen points had been violated. In my opinion, if President has consented to this, it will be fatal. The matter is so important to the people of the world that he could have afforded to go any length even to leaving the Conference than to submit to this ruling. His attitude in this matter will lose a great deal of the confidence and support of the people of the world which he has had up to this time.

That the President was honestly puzzled by the problem is to be seen in his reply to Secretary Tumulty on January 16:

Your cable about misunderstandings concerning my attitude toward problems created by the newspaper cablegrams concerns a matter which I admit I do not know how to handle. Every one of the things you mention is a fable. I have not only yielded nothing but have been asked to yield nothing. These manœuvres which the cablegram speaks of are purely imaginary. I cannot check them from this end because the men who sent them insist on having something to talk about, whether they know what the facts are or not. I will do my best with the three press associations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him," by Joseph P. Tumulty, pp. 518-519.

The effect of this great and sudden agitation upon the Conference, together with the fact that there were leakages to the French press—where such leakages would help the French cause—were instant and disconcerting. On January 15, at the very opening of the council, Mr. Lloyd George voiced a sharp protest against the French leakages:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE referred to the agreement that no information regarding what took place at the meetings should be given out other than that issued by the Secretariat. He wished to point out that he had noticed that the French Press had published the clause regarding the proposed demands on the German Government to deliver its gold reserve, etc.

M. PICHON explained that while it was true that it had been published here, this was due to the fact that the French journalists knew that it was known to British and American journalists, and that it would appear in their papers, as there was no British or American censorship of the Press.

As a matter of fact, the American journalists never knew these facts, nor published them.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE remarked that if this were true, their whole system was faulty. He referred to the fact that the British Delegation had a man in Paris especially for the purpose of handling the Press, and stated that he was quite certain that the information had not been obtained from this representative.

The French then set forth their ideas of how the press should be managed. There should be absolute secrecy of proceedings, a communiqué each day by the Secretariat, and finally, as M. Pichon said, "all else should be censored."

To make this effective "it would be necessary to stop any communications by cable, and he suggested that each Government appoint a representative to discuss this matter and take the necessary steps."

This would have made the Conference absolutely secret, absolutely in the control of the leaders present, who could give out such information to the world as they thought favoured the causes in which they were interested.

Nothing, of course, was more obnoxious to the American tradition, and to President Wilson, than any censorship whatsoever. He had even been against the practice of all of the belligerent countries in censoring the mails during the war, though he was strongly urged in May, 1917, by his Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, to order such censorship. And no sooner was the war over than all censorship of cable and wireless messages was removed. Moreover, a clear understanding with the French Government existed to the effect that, if the Peace Conference came to Paris, there should be no French censorship of American dispatches. While at the very beginning there were a few instances in which the French military censors did interfere on the ground that military matters were involved, they were trivial, and throughout the Conference American correspondents were wholly untrammelled by any censorship whatsoever.

President Wilson therefore objected to the French proposal, and the following discussion took place:

Mr. WILSON referred to the taking over of the cables by the United States Government. This action on his part had furnished an opportunity to his political opponents to criticize him, claiming that he had taken this action for the purpose of censorship of information regarding his actions in Europe. He had, of course, repudiated the idea. Therefore, should he now try to put a censorship in force, it would afford an opportunity to his opponents to further embarrass him. He felt confident if those present were thoughtful regarding what they stated to the Press, censorship would be unnecessary.

M. CLEMENCEAU observed that if there were no censorship in the United States, and censorship in Europe, half the world would know what was going on and the other half would be left in ignorance.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE thought that the British people would have something to say if all the news came from America.<sup>1</sup>

Here was the issue clearly joined between the French idea and the American idea. The more the Paris Conference is studied the clearer grows the impression that the struggle throughout, upon this as upon nearly all other subjects, was directly between French policies and American principles.

When the Conference began President Wilson had hoped for great and steady support from Mr. Lloyd George, but this hope soon faded. As the Conference deepened the President's personal respect and admiration for Clemenceau increased. They agreed upon scarcely anything whatsoever, but each recognized that the other stood honestly for a certain definite and intelligent policy which could be argued and fought for. And each recognized in the other an antagonist worthy of his steel.

This struggle over publicity, then, was primarily between the French, with secret diplomacy, a censored press, many newspapers controlled by Foreign Office influence, or subsidized by foreign governments (as by Turkey and Italy), and the Americans with their demand for all the publicity possible, a free press, and no censorship. The Italians throughout sided with the French. The Japanese, with sphinx-like self-control, said nothing, but never lost sight of a single angle in the discussion. Mr. Lloyd George dreaded and feared the press and yet tried to control it. He would undoubtedly have liked to play the full French game, but came from a country where the press, or a large part of it, is obstinately free. He was always thinking of the political aspects of every publicity question, as on January 16:

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 15,

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that there were papers in each of the Allied countries which were opposed to the government, and that these papers would make use of any information which they might obtain from the delegates of one government to discredit the delegates of another. There were several English papers which he knew were determined to discredit the plans of the British Government.

Here was the secret spring of Lloyd George's policy—and his fear—throughout. Clemenceau did not fear his press because he could control most of it; Wilson could not control a single newspaper in America, but he never feared the press, because he thought he had American public opinion behind him.

On January 16 the discussion of publicity opened in the Council of Ten with new violence. President Wilson laid upon the table the letter of protest he had received from the American correspondents. He remarked also that he had been receiving most unfavourable reports from America regarding the secrecy of the Conference. He was determined to have more publicity.

Nor was Clemenceau, upon his part, happy. He, too, was meeting the new fact that every nation at Paris had to meet—that national isolation went to the scrap heap with the great war: if, for example, one nation had a censored press, it was in danger from all nations with a free press. Here is Clemenceau's statement:

M. CLEMENCEAU stated that he did not think that the solution arrived at regarding the Press was practical. He pointed out that there was no censorship of the Press in the United States or in England, while there was a French censorship in operation. Consequently this was manifestly unfair, as false news could be sent from here to the United States or England, and come back via America. Coming from America, it would be impossible to stop it. He also referred to the story carried in the New York Tribune which practically threatens the Allied Governments with withdrawal of U. S. forces in Europe.

It would seem desirable to have either total secrecy on all sides, which is absolutely impossible, or complete publicity.

President Wilson then threw a bomb into the proceedings by suggesting "complete publicity of all that happened."

Here, then, was the issue, which Clemenceau, with his clear French mind, plainly saw, between "total secrecy on all sides," and "complete publicity."

President Wilson followed up his suggestion for complete publicity by saying that "the public of the United States wanted open sessions."

Whenever the delegates came thus to an utter impasse, with complete disagreement staring them in the face, Clemenceau invariably made a speech demanding that the conferees maintain unanimity at any cost. "I will sacrifice much for unanimity," he said often and often. And that thought was also constantly in the minds of every man there. The world was in chaos, it was peace or anarchy, the only authority left in the world was in their four hands. It would have been a light mind, indeed, that would have allowed any minor consideration to break up the Conference. When these two doggedly determined men, Wilson and Clemenceau—and if they were alike in little else they were alike in being obstinate fighters—faced one another it was either break or find a way through. Consequently each side began to suggest compromises:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that the issuance of some kind of statement explaining the danger of giving out information from day to day before a final decision on any one question was reached, appealed strongly to him. He thought it would be well to issue an appeal to the public not to pay too much attention to unauthorized news. . . . He believed that a majority of the public would understand such an appeal, and would discredit the news.

President Wilson then returned to his idea of a press committee of allied nations, which he had suggested on the day before, and inquired

whether those present saw any virtue in the suggestion that Sir George Riddle, Mr. Baker and the representatives of the Italian and French delegates meet the newspaper correspondents, tell them frankly that the object of these conversations is to come to an understanding, and that if news were to be given out from moment to moment, a false impression would be made.

M. CLEMENCEAU did not think that this would stop the man who wanted to send false news from doing so.

President WILSON did not see how he could be stopped in any case. He thought that his proposal would be the most efficacious way of handling the matter, as regards small conferences, and suggested that meanwhile those present resolve that the large conferences shall be open to the Press.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE remarked that the Press once let in could never be excluded. . . .

Mr. BALFOUR inquired whether the company present had carefully considered what would be the function of the great conferences, if they were made entirely open to the Press. Would it not result in their becoming purely a matter of form?

After further discussion, Mr. Lloyd George finally referred to the suggestion of President Wilson and said he supported the proposal to have the representatives of the delegates obtain the views of the press by the following day. He asked President Wilson to be good enough to repeat his suggestion.

President WILSON stated that the three representatives (Sir George Riddle, Ray Stannard Baker, and Captain Pueux) should call the representatives of the Press and explain the difficulties with which the delegates were faced with regard to the question of giving out information and inform them that the delegates did not think it would facilitate results if the details of the present discussions were outlined in public. The three representatives should also make it clear to the Press that it was the desire of the delegates to tell them as

fully and freely as possible of the determination taken at these conferences. In conclusion, the three representatives should ask the Press to express their views as to what they considered the best method for carrying out the desires of the delegates.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting suggested by the Council was called by the representatives and met at the Hotel Dufayel (the Interallied Press Club) at 5 o'clock. A large attendance of the press of all countries was present, perhaps the first session of the kind ever to be held. It was a rather curious circumstance that marked divisions of opinion existed among the correspondents themselves as to the degree of publicity which should be demanded. The American correspondents were generally for complete publicity for everything. The British correspondents, nearly all of whom had very much more experience in international affairs than the Americans, were more sensitive to the problems and difficulties attendant upon such circumstances and were not so sure that undiluted publicity of the proceedings was either wise or possible, and the French correspondents were either so closely in touch with the Foreign Office and indeed so concerned with the common fears and ambitions of France that their position was not different from that of Clemenceau.

Because of this diversity, the want of any common standard or technique, the meeting, of course, failed in its purpose. Underneath the President's suggestion had lain the familiar American idea of being frank with the press, explaining the difficulties honestly, and then trusting to the honour and good sense of the correspondents. It had been proved over and over again that no group of men can be more fully trusted to keep a confidence or use it wisely than a group of experienced newspaper correspondents—if they are honestly informed and trusted in

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 16.

the first place. But when the American press representative arose to speak he could not promise the primary condition, real frankness, and could not therefore ask caution. I reported the results of this meeting to the President and said frankly that I did not think the results satisfactory.

The Council also tried, the next day, the plan suggested by Lloyd George of sending a general admonition to the press, warning them of the danger of too much publicity, referring to the Conference as a Cabinet meeting and setting forth the vital spirit of the President's view in these words:

The essence of democratic method is not that deliberations of a Government should be conducted in public, but that its conclusions should be subject to the consideration of a popular Chamber and to free and open discussions on the platform and in the Press.<sup>1</sup>

But these efforts seemed only to encourage the American correspondents to greater activity, more meetings, and further resolutions.<sup>2</sup>

The President had also suggested having the large conference, the plenary sessions, open to the public. This was at first opposed by every other leader and was once decided in the negative, but the President finally won out in his contention, and the correspondents were admitted to the first general session of the Conference on January 18 and to most of those that followed. While it was a real victory for the American idea, in which the American correspondents and the President both played a great part, the effect was, as Balfour predicted, to make the open sessions largely matters of form.

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 4, for full text.

<sup>2</sup>On January 16 the American and British correspondents, at a meeting at the Ritz Hotel, lasting most of the night, endeavoured to secure united action on the part of the press of all nations, but met obstinate opposition from the French. Two sets of resolutions were finally adopted and sent to the heads of States; one in which the French joined and one independent of the French. See Volume III, Document 5, for full text.

Such was the general method adopted. While it provided for more publicity than the "old order" desired, it also, by implication, limited the right of the President to appeal to public opinion in differences with other leaders—one of his most important potential weapons. He adhered to the "Cabinet" rule in the case of the struggle with France, but broke it in the case of the Italians—with results which must be treated elsewhere.

We come now to another difficult element in the problem of publicity—the temperamental limitations of the President himself. It is astonishing, but it is true, that neither the correspondents themselves nor the public in America ever knew what a fight the President had made. He had a wonderful opportunity here; his cause in reality was the same as that of the American press and the American people. By taking the correspondents into his confidence at this time—as indeed the writer urged him strongly to do—he could have made common cause with them and bound them to him with bands of steel. He could have had press support he never got, that might in the upshot have gained him the very little additional support he needed in America to put through the Treaty and the League. He did not even let the correspondents know afterward what he had done; he did not inform me definitely enough of his own part so that I could in my official capacity give it out; it probably never occurred to him to tell even Mrs. Wilson.

Again and again I urged conferences with correspondents at Paris; on the two or three occasions when he did meet them, he made a convincing impression, but he seemed to dread such meetings. He never seemed to appreciate the value of mere human contact. I know he sympathized with the appeal of the correspondents of January 14; he used that appeal effectively: but he never thought

of telling them so; he never thanked them, and consequently many of them thought him hostile. Once when I urged that he see a group of correspondents and tell them about a certain subject, he remarked:

“But I’ve already said it.”

He had said it, yes, in a speech!

One element in this aloofness that grew more pronounced as the burdens of the Conference increased was the state of his health. He was always working to the very limit of his endurance, or past it. Often at the close of the day, when I went up to see him, he seemed utterly beaten down, worn out. It seemed cruelty to ask him to do another thing, say another word. Dr. Grayson was always warning him not to go too far. Contacts with the correspondents took physical and nervous energy, and therefore he reserved his strength for what he considered more important matters. But at Paris, where so much depended upon the right publicity and the support of world public opinion, these temperamental and physical limitations were costly indeed.

But, in spite of all warnings and elaborate arrangements made to maintain secrecy in the small meetings, there was still leakage. As the American and British correspondents became acquainted, various private channels were opened and they occasionally secured information that the councils wished to keep secret. But the great leakage was still to the French press. The French Foreign Office was permeated with channels of information for friendly journalists, and these were wonderfully directed to obtain the results which the French desired. Correspondents from other countries, barred from direct information as to what was happening, drew on these French sources, and the news to every part of the world thus came, more and more, to have a French tinge.

One day in February, while he was at a crucial point in his fight for the League of Nations, the President showed me a memorandum which he said he had from unimpeachable sources giving the instructions just sent out to the French Government press:

- (1) To magnify Republican opposition in the United States to the President and his Administration.
- (2) To emphasize chaotic conditions in Russia.
- (3) To show that Germany is willing and able to renew the struggle.

"If this keeps on I shall suggest moving the Conference to Geneva, or somewhere out of Paris," said the President.

Indeed, what can be thought of a situation like this, in which, during a friendly conference of allied nations a group of newspapers well known to be influenced by the Government of one of them is used to attack and make as difficult as possible the course of the chief delegate of another nation?

On March 14 Tumulty cabled the President: "Publicity from European end doing great damage here." On the same day he telegraphed: "Country greatly disturbed over stories appearing Paris and elsewhere under Associated Press head that League of Nations is not to be included in peace treaty."

Another development affecting publicity also took place. While the Council of Ten in the beginning had been quite strictly limited to the two leading delegates of each of the four or five nations with a few secretaries and experts, the tendency of the meetings was to grow larger. On March 6 the military experts were present, and these, with the members of the delegations and the secretaries, made up an attendance of fifty-five. The tendency was to increase the length of the speeches and also to increase enormously the likelihood of leaks.

Mr. Lloyd George especially had been restive under this condition, and on March 6 he said he "thought that the text itself should not be discussed before so large a Meeting. The British delegates could not see their way to accept the terms as they appeared at the present moment without large modifications; but those were questions which the Delegates themselves could alone discuss, as they alone would be responsible for the final decisions taken."

He said at another time he was afraid of getting "a kind of public meeting."

All of these factors, together with a now violently inconsistent demand throughout the world that peace be made quickly, were elements in bringing about the still smaller councils of the four heads of the great Powers, where only the four leaders (sometimes only three), with two or three utterly impenetrable secretaries, were present. In these conferences of the "Big Four," decisions that had long hung fire were rapidly made and the Treaty formulated. A more complete account of the complicated reasons for this secrecy and what came of it must be left for the chapters of the "Dark Period" in which the real struggle between Wilson and Clemenceau took place.

Suffice it to say that from the middle of March to the end of the Conference the actual conversations of the Big Four were kept secret to a remarkable degree, but the decisions were fully made known from time to time. President Wilson was greatly criticized for not taking his fellow Commissioners into his confidence—even Colonel House—but the same criticism was also made of Clemenceau and Lloyd George, that their fellow delegates did not know what was going on and could not find out. Even Mr. Balfour was often in complete darkness regarding the details of what was happening. Each of the four no

doubt gave to his official press representative each day, as the President gave to me—as described in the last chapter—a general survey of the subjects discussed, which he in turn passed on to the correspondents, but it was never a satisfactory method.

Two other critical problems in publicity arose during the Conference. One centred around the demand of the press to be present at the presentation of the Treaty to the Germans at Versailles; the other involved the still greater problem of the publicity of the Treaty itself.

Probably the most dramatic and impressive meeting of the entire Peace Conference was that of May 7, when the leaders of the victorious allied Powers met the leaders of defeated Germany for the first time. It was the occasion upon which the completed Treaty was formally presented to the German delegation. No people in the world are so skillful in staging such a spectacle as the French, and they had done their best to give due impressiveness and solemnity to this particular assemblage as a symbol of their victory over their historic enemies. They had in their minds, no doubt, the traditions of former gatherings of this kind; full of ceremony, yet with the distinction of simplicity, and the whole idea of the press—the representatives of democracy—crowding into the scene, was intensely repugnant to them.

But they had to recognize that there was a public and a press in the world, so they made arrangements in the yard outside, near the gate, which they camouflaged with shrubs and behind which they proposed to allow correspondents to stand and see the delegates go in, and afterward come out. It may be imagined what a shout went up from the American correspondents. The enclosures in the yard were at once denominated the “dugouts” and “communication trenches.” Again they held meet-

ings in the office of the Press Bureau and passed resolutions.<sup>1</sup> The writer had gone to Versailles and discovered that there was room for a reasonable number of correspondents within the building. When I came back I tried to enlist Mr. Lansing's help in changing the arrangement, but he quite agreed with the French, so I carried the matter to the President, and he promised to make the fight for us in the Council of Four. This he did on April 30:

President WILSON said that he was informed that the Allied and Associated journalists were very anxious to see the Treaty of Peace handed to the Germans. He understood that under present arrangements they were only to be permitted to view the approach of the Germans from behind a hedge. He was informed that there was a room . . . [where] a number of journalists could be accommodated . . . and view the proceedings.

To this Mr. Lloyd George objected strenuously:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE suggested that it was very undignified and improper to admit the journalists and to treat the meeting almost as though it were a menagerie. He did not mind so much the presence of two or three. But it had to be borne in mind that the Germans were in a very delicate and disagreeable position and might have just cause to complain at descriptions being given of the precise manner in which they received the Treaty. He had no bowels of compassion for the Germans, but he thought that the admission of journalists on such an occasion would be unprecedented.

M. CLEMENCEAU suggested that at any rate, they might be admitted to be present at the end of the corridor in order to witness the arrival and departure of the Delegates.

President WILSON said he did not agree in this decision, as he considered on principle that the journalists should be present, but he did not press his objection.

(It was agreed that the journalists should be permitted to witness

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 6, for these protests.

the arrival of the delegates from the end of the corridor in the Trianon Hotel.<sup>1</sup>

This got the journalists into the corridor; it took another fight by the President to get them into the room itself—but finally, to make the distinction clear, they were required to enter by the back door! Five journalists from each nation, including Germany, were admitted. Three of the American press tickets went of course to the press associations, and the other two, after much discussion, were assigned by lot by the special correspondents themselves, the two going to Mr. Oulahan of the *New York Times* and Mr. Hayden of the *Detroit News*. In this case the press of the entire world profited by the fight made by the American correspondents and the backing they got from President Wilson in the Council of Four.

The problem of the time for publishing the Treaty was more important and far-reaching in its consequences. It began in the Council of Three (the Italians then being absent) as early as April 23 and came up frequently for extended discussion during the coming month. Here a curious situation developed. Clemenceau was insistently for publication of the Treaty when it was given to the Germans, May 7. He said:

M. CLEMENCEAU strongly urged that the Treaty should be published when it was communicated to the Germans. It would not be fair to our own people to let the Germans see the Treaty and to conceal it from them. His own position would be an impossible one if the Treaty were not published. It was absolutely certain that the Germans would publish it, particularly if they wished to make mischief for us and it would make a very bad impression in the countries of the Allied and Associated Powers if the public first learnt of the terms of the Treaty of Peace from the German wireless.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, April 30.

<sup>2</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 23.

There were other reasons why the French desired immediate publication. The Treaty not only went far toward giving the French the terms they had argued for, especially those relating to reparations, Silesia, and the Saar, but published at once and before the Germans were given any opportunity to reply, changes would be more difficult to make. And the French wanted every item of the Treaty imposed unconditionally upon the Germans: they wanted no changes whatever.

But Lloyd George opposed publication as insistently as Clemenceau supported it. As the terms of the Treaty began to be known in England there had arisen sharp criticism, especially among the liberal and labour elements. Such eminent leaders as General Smuts and General Botha were dissatisfied—General Smuts even threatened that he would not sign the Treaty; some of the great British economic interests suddenly discovered that it was a “French peace” and would so cripple Germany as to delay the economic revival of Europe. This disturbed Lloyd George and he began thinking of making changes.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said he had received a message from General Smuts, who considered that the Germans would obtain a considerable diplomatic advantage if the Treaty were published. In such a gigantic document there would have to be a good many alterations, and the Germans would claim these to be a diplomatic victory for them. He pointed out that in many parts of the Treaty he himself had had to trust to experts who were not really looking at the Treaty as a whole. He anticipated, when he read the Treaty as a whole, that he might find a good many unexpected clauses, some inconsistent with others, just as had happened to him sometimes in introducing a complicated Bill into Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

At first President Wilson was doubtful about what course he should take. On April 24 he had said that,

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 5.

although publication was undesirable, it was, he believed, also unavoidable, but later, upon hearing Lloyd George's arguments—and in the hope that he now had of joining with Lloyd George and securing certain modifications in some of the harsher terms of the Treaty—he agreed that the text ought not to be published at once. But they compromised with Clemenceau by arranging for the preparation and publication of a summary of the Treaty described in the last chapter. This, however, did not prevent Clemenceau from pressing his argument again and again—until the German replies were printed—for the publication of the Treaty.

There also began to be a demand in the British Parliament and the American Senate for the text. Parts of it had leaked out. A copy soon afterward reached Wall Street and was seen by Senator Lodge, who made a bitter speech in the Senate criticizing the President for withholding the Treaty. One day, at the very height of the controversy, a full copy of the Treaty in German was laid upon my desk, and we were informed that copies could be had for two francs each in Belgium. With cables, wireless, and printing presses, secrecy had become practically an impossibility in the world. On May 12 the following discussion took place in the Council of Four:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said that there was a demand from the British Parliament for the Treaty of Peace to be laid on the Table of the House. He had replied that he must consult his colleagues before he could possibly consent. Mr. Bonar Law had given his view that as a summary had been published, the inference would be drawn if the Treaty was not published that the summary was inaccurate.

Mr. CLEMENCEAU said he had already refused to lay the Treaty, both to the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Mr. ORLANDO said he did not like publication, as it made it so much more difficult to make changes.

M. SONNINÓ agreed with this view.

President WILSON said that he could not lay the Treaty before the Senate until he returned to the United States.

(It was agreed that the text of the Treaty of Peace as handed to the Germans should not be laid before the legislatures of the Allied and Associated Powers.)

The President, having made his decision, adhered to it, and the Treaty was not officially made public in America until transmitted to the Senate.

Such was the struggle for publicity at Paris. It was wholly without precedent in any former world congress, and had a profound effect upon the deliberations of the Conference itself.

Having thus outlined the forces of the new order as distinguished from the old, we can proceed to the tactical struggles for position, for control, for organization, which marked the early days of the Conference. Much depended upon these matters of procedure.

## CHAPTER IX

### FORCES OF THE OLD AND NEW JOIN ISSUE AT PARIS— STRUGGLE BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVIL LEADERS

**I**T IS going to be a rough-and-tumble affair, this Peace Conference," Mr. Balfour had prophesied two months before it began.

It was a sagacious prophecy. The forces of the Old Order went to Paris, as has been shown, quite confident of making a peace of their own kind. They were in the stronger tactical position. They had with them tradition, experience, trained diplomatic leadership, and, above all, consummate organization. No parts of the governmental fabrics of Europe, sensitive to their own security, were so perfectly developed as the diplomatic and military systems.

On the other hand, the forces of the New Order, as shown in previous chapters, were also gathered at Paris, not without vigorous organization and leadership, and, if wanting in tradition, full of enthusiasm and aspiration; and confident (however justly) that if they did not have the support of the leaders of the European Governments, at least they had with them the people of the world. These two forces now came strongly into conflict, and in the first place, naturally enough, over tactical problems of organization and procedure. Who should control this vital world conference? Should it be the military men who had been controlling Europe for four years, or should the civil authorities again assert their dominance?

Few people realize what a struggle went on at Paris—

throughout the Conference—between the military group and heads of States. This effort within the secret conferences to escape from military dominance and the military spirit will be treated in the present chapter. After that came the not less vital struggle as to what Powers should control the Conference, what procedure should be followed, and what language—language is always a symbol of power—should be regarded as official.

In the eagerness to know what was done at Paris too little attention has been given to these enormously important initial matters of organization. In any political convention, any trade union, any business organization, it is the A B C of the proceedings to make sure of controlling organization and procedure. So it was preëminently at Paris. A large proportion of the settlements were either decided or profoundly influenced before they were even discussed.

I remember well my first sight of Marshal Foch, at a curiously dramatic moment, which I shall think of always as a kind of symbol of the entire Peace Conference. It was in the ante-room of M. Pichon's Cabinet at the French Office in the Quai d'Orsay, that high-ceiled room with its old tapestries and rich carpets and upholstery and liveried servants, who were always going noiselessly in and out.

In the room beyond were meeting the chiefs of the four great Powers with their various advisers and secretaries. The President of the United States was there and the Prime Minister of Great Britain, the Premier of Italy, and the President of the Council of France.

One entered M. Pichon's Cabinet of State through double doors fitted with steel rods so that they closed together and made the room within quite sound proof. I found out later that this secrecy was only one of the fine ceremonials of diplomacy and that the proceedings within

trickled out through channels closed by no double doors; but as a ceremonial it was highly impressive.

One morning—this was in January not long after the beginning of the Conference—I saw these doors burst suddenly open as though vigorously pushed from within, and out strode a short, stocky, gray-haired man, very erect, who looked like some old and studious college professor, but who wore the uniform of a marshal of France. Behind him came flying the little, agile Pichon, pleading with him to return.

*“Jamais, Jamais!”* said Marshal Foch angrily.

No, he would never return. He was through with the Peace Conference. He would never go back.

But in a moment he was suddenly persuaded; and he did go back, and the secret doors closed again behind him. I never saw him afterward without having the impression that he looked more like a contemplative old scholar than like a great general. And he had amiability and charm of manner.

“I want to shake your hand, Marshal Foch,” said an American who met him.

“Shake both of them,” he replied heartily, holding them out.

I have sometimes thought of the incident I have described as a symbol of the Peace Conference, for throughout those troubled months at Paris the generals and the admirals, it seemed, were forever being thrust out of the councils by the frock coats and forever being called back again, or coming back of their own accord. It must never be forgotten that they had until that hour, for more than four years, been supreme in the world. They had at Paris in the Supreme War Council, with its powerful economic satellites, a world government, a real super-State, a league of nations, by the side of which the

League later covenanted at Paris, so far as immediate power was concerned, was a pale reminiscence. They were strong men, these generals, accustomed to untrammelled power, and they let go reluctantly.

This is no mere allegory of what happened at Paris; it was actually the way the Peace Conference began. At the head of the first page of the Secret Minutes of the Peace Conference, on January 12, 1919, the first day of the session, will be found this caption, "Notes of a Meeting of the Supreme War Council."

Not only the peacemakers were there, but the generals, too: Foch and Weygand for France, Sir Henry Wilson for Great Britain, General Bliss for America. And Marshal Foch, the hero of France, was present with great new military plans. He was still for fighting! He recommended sending immediately an allied army (chiefly of Americans and commanded by an American) to Poland; he was for crushing, instantly, the Bolsheviks of Russia; he was for sorting out all the vast numbers of Russian prisoners of war in Germany and sending home those who were opposed to the Bolsheviks; he was for keeping military possession of the Rhine permanently for France.

Thus it was that the American peacemakers coming to Europe to attend a peace conference found themselves, first of all, in a supreme council of war concerned with a renewal of the Armistice and the immediate military problems of Europe. The initial problem that presented itself was no mere struggle to apply accepted principles to a static situation, no mere grappling of the new diplomacy, the new order, with the old; no great and noble endeavour to establish a world organization, but, in very truth, a driven effort to put out the still obstinately blazing embers of war. Peace had, indeed, been agreed upon in November, but peace had not arrived.

On page 7 of these historic records of the first day's session (January 12) one will find these words:

He then [M. Pichon, the Chairman] decided that the meeting should continue without the military men who thereupon withdrew.

There follows a double spacing upon the page, and then these words:

M. Pichon thought that it was in order for the meeting to consider the procedure of the Conference.

In this informal, yet somehow studied, way, the Peace Conference began, slipping from a Supreme War Council into a Supreme Peace Council—as it again and again so easily slipped back. The Americans who came to Paris thus stepped into a moving machine, well oiled, and operated by men who had long been working together; and working for destructive, not for reconstructive purposes. Moreover, the military men had in reality, in making such sweeping armistice terms, gone far toward predetermining and shaping the peace settlements. The French got the line of the Rhine, the Italians that of the London treaty—and possession is nine points.

Critics after the event forgot that peace had to be made in an atmosphere still reeking with the fumes of war and still more or less dominated by the military spirit. It could not have been otherwise. For four years the nations had been committed to the use of every agency in building up a war psychology; to giving men the martial spirit, instilling hatred as an antidote for fear, driving nations into an artificial unity of purpose by the force of sheer necessity. As a monument to this passion and bitterness there were 7,500,000 men lying dead in Europe and 20,000,000 had been wounded; there were devastated cities, ruined mines and factories, stupendous debts. Build up such a

psychology for four years, inoculate the entire public opinion of the world with it, and then ask four men at Paris—or one man at Paris—to change it all in three months! It was not merely a world peace that had to be made but a world psychology that had to be changed.

No inconsiderable part of the attention of the Conference was directed, all the way through, to extinguishing the little remaining fires left over from the great conflagration—in Russia, Hungary, Asia, and elsewhere. Once we counted no fewer than fourteen such small wars going on in various parts of Europe. The military men “who thereupon withdrew” on January 12 kept returning all through the Conference, with their military methods, their military suggestions, their military ambitions—as they have been returning ever since; or they confused its purposes and balked its activities by summary action on their own account. They were always breaking out in Poland, Russia, Germany, Hungary, Jugoslavia, and elsewhere, trying to take things into their own hands, and, too often, as I shall show later, they were secretly encouraged by leaders within the very councils of the Powers themselves. We find French generals encouraging a revolution in the Rhine provinces; a British general setting up a “White” government in western Russia; Italian officers acting on their own account on the Adriatic and in Asia Minor, and even an American officer leading the Czechs into the Teschen coal basin!

Literally the first clashes in the Conference arose directly out of the attempt to substitute civil for military methods. Thus when Marshal Foch suggested that an allied army, made up chiefly of American troops, be sent to Poland immediately, for the purpose of fighting the Bolsheviks, President Wilson strongly opposed the plan. He said “there was great doubt in his mind as to whether

Bolshevism could be checked by arms, therefore it seemed to him unwise to take action in a military form before the Powers were agreed upon a course of action for checking Bolshevism as a social and political danger."

Military leaders had been all-powerful for so long it was difficult for them to stop functioning. They sought not only military control, but desired to dominate in political and economic matters as well. When our Treasury representative, Mr. Davis, arrived in Paris he was informed by M. Klotz, French Minister of Finance, that he would simply be an adviser to Marshal Foch, to which he immediately and strenuously objected. When it was proposed that civil experts be attached to Marshal Foch in his dealings with the Germans at Spa, he indignantly spurned the suggestion and for a time refused to carry out the orders of his own Government unless he was allowed to retain full power. Clemenceau had actually to plead with him.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that, putting aside altogether his own personal opinions, he would allow himself to ask Marshal Foch whether he would not subordinate his own personal feelings and inclinations, in order to remain the mouthpiece of the Allies. . . . It was essential that no dissensions should appear among the Allies on the eve of taking a decision which might lead to very serious consequences, even to a renewal of hostilities.<sup>1</sup>

But Foch rejected the idea of having any authority above him. He would not go to Spa "merely to deliver a letter." He was not "merely a letterbox."

It took a private session with the heads of the Governments (on March 24) finally to persuade him.

Thus the struggle to keep down or abate the military spirit arose often to the sharpest controversies. Once

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, March 21.

Clemenceau (February 7) burst out with the remark that "Marshal Foch was not a military Pope; he was sometimes mistaken. He was a great general and all were prepared to do him honour as such," but there was other work here to do! In a later session, when Marshal Foch practically demanded that the peace terms be ready by April 1, Mr. Balfour observed that the military delegates "wished to force the Council to settle peace by that date under pain of not being able to enforce their will upon the enemy. This was equivalent to holding a pistol at the head of the Council."

Lloyd George had often to defy the generals. "No general's opinion will shake my decision," he said on March 7.

Constantly the remedies suggested were those of force. Here were great armies still undemobilized; why not use them? That army of 2,000,000 young Americans in superb condition was a vast temptation to the generals; expeditions over half the world were planned for it in the six months after the Armistice.

No man fought harder than President Wilson to prevent extensions of war, to get away from the military spirit, to set up again normal agencies and civil processes. I remember once taking up to him some excellent reports by the experts on the situation in Central Europe. He read them carefully and said:

They are like most of the reports we get; good enough in presenting the facts, but they do not tell us what to do. They all ask us to make more war.

It was the Prussian idea of force, of military sanctions and military methods that he was seeking to get away from—that had to be got away from before peace could be

made. This was a part of the "old order" that had caused the war; he was there to establish a "new order." They had hewn away, with stupendous effort, the head of the Prussian hydra, and here had grown new hydra-heads all over Europe. The old forces were even here in the Peace Conference, trying to dictate or at least influence the settlements. In an eloquent argument in the Council of Four, while the Italian question was under discussion and Sonnino was arguing on the basis of the secret treaty of London for the control of the Adriatic by Italy, for military reasons, the President said:

Military men with their strategic, military, economic arguments, had been responsible for the Treaty of 1815. Similarly, military men had been responsible for Alsace-Lorraine. It was military men who had led Europe to one blunder after another. . . . We were now engaged in setting up an international association. . . . If this did not suffice, then two orders would exist—the old and the new. . . . We could not drive two horses at once. The people of the United States of America would repudiate it. They were disgusted with the old order. Not only the American people but the people of the whole world were tired of the old system and they would not put up with Governments that supported it.<sup>1</sup>

But the French desired a strong, hard peace, and if they had suffered terribly by military force they still clung desperately to it. They were still afraid, and not without reason, of Germany. It was they who had suffered most, borne the brunt of the war; it was they who would be most likely to suffer again should Germany rise to power and prove revengeful. They were well aware what terms the Germans would have imposed upon them if they had been the victors. They were, therefore, fearful of a too swift demobilization of the allied armies, a too rapid sub-

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 19.

sidence of the martial spirit. They wished to maintain large armies for possible use against Germany or Russia. It was plain that the more vigorous the maintenance of the war feeling, the severer the peace terms could be made.

It was one of the great criticisms of the President by the French that he delayed so long in visiting the devastated regions. They apparently wished to steel him to severity by giving him a visual demonstration of how France had suffered, how France felt, imparting to him some measure of their own sorrow and bitterness. On February 10 M. Klotz, French Minister of Finance, was brought into the Council and began reading a pamphlet regarding the frightful destruction of French industries by the Germans in the occupied regions. But President Wilson said that "this evidence might no doubt affect their frame of mind, but what effect would it have on their plans?" He felt with all his strength that the peace must not be approached in a spirit of passion or hatred or fear, but with all the calmness, the reason, the patience, that could be commanded. It was peace that they wanted, not the spirit of revenge. This he worked for, early and late.

At each renewal of the already severe armistice terms Marshal Foch endeavoured to impose more and harder conditions upon the enemy and even to anticipate, by armistice extensions which could be finally enforced by military action, settlements which properly belonged in the Peace Treaty.

President Wilson set down his foot firmly against these extensions, arguing that the Germans had ceased fighting upon certain agreed terms and that it was not just or right to force them to accept new terms in advance of the Treaty. The Allies had endorsed his plan of settlement; and the Germans had ceased fighting upon a clear understanding of its provisions. He saw in such methods only

a revival of the hatreds and bitterness of the war, which he was seeking to allay.

President WILSON said that . . . he had thought it his duty to oppose any addition to the armistice terms. He thought that the Council should have known what it was doing when the armistice was drawn up, and that it was not sportsmanlike to attempt to correct now the errors that had then been made.<sup>1</sup>

In this he was strongly supported by General Bliss, who had made his fight previously in the Military Section of the Supreme War Council, and even sent to the Ten a minority report embodying his objection. "The introduction of such demands into the renewed armistice, accompanied by threat to use force, is dishonourable . . . it is not necessary, and . . . it may mean the resumption of the war."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Lloyd George, and more especially Mr. Balfour, supported the Americans in this contention.

But throughout the Conference Marshal Foch stubbornly fought for the extreme French demands. The whole Peace Conference must have been a hateful experience for the grizzled old general who had won the war. All his life long he had been trained to no other end than to make war; he knew only military ways and military methods, and throughout the Conference he worked passionately for the welfare of France, as he saw it, and in the only way he knew, which was the warlike way. One had often the impression that though he was the most acclaimed man in all France, walking always in glory, yet that he was full of bitterness of spirit. If he had had his way he would no doubt have plunged Europe into more

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 7.

<sup>2</sup>From letter from General Bliss to President Wilson summarizing this minority report.

war, not only immediate war, but more fearful future war, but he nevertheless thought himself absolutely right in his contentions. He could kneel humbly at Mass each morning, as was his invariable custom, and ask the blessing of God upon what he did. Finally, so unrelenting was his opposition that they made the Treaty without even allowing him to see a copy of its provisions before it was presented to the sixth plenary session.

"I should have certain remarks to make," he said in a powerful speech on that occasion, "if I had the text of the Treaty draft, but I must admit it is not yet in my possession."

Nevertheless, he stood up there, a bold, obstinate, brave, short-sighted old soldier, to fight to the last a treaty he thought not severe enough. That he had with him a large following of French public opinion is certain—a public opinion that deposed Clemenceau as soon as the Peace Conference was at an end.

As an unescapable corollary of this war spirit, as a result of the overwhelming victory of the Allies, the impulse everywhere among both the great and small nations of Europe—the small nations were as unrestrained as the great—was to seize instantly upon the material fruits of victory—to grab. There had been vast losses, losses in men and property; these must be recouped and recouped at once. And this was by no means the spirit alone of the leaders, who wanted islands, coal mines, cities, or ships; every peasant who had lost a cow wanted his cow—or two cows!—instantly returned to him. This aspect of the situation, after the Peace Conference began, became so bitter, so menacing, that on January 24 President Wilson drew up the following communication to the nations of the world, read it to his associates in the Conference, and with their approval it was issued. This warning against

the world-wide spirit of grab was thus his first important public utterance at the Peace Conference.

The governments now associated in conference to effect a lasting peace among the nations are deeply disturbed by the news which comes to them of the many instances in which armed force is being made use of, in many parts of Europe and the East, to gain possession of territory, the rightful claim to which the Peace Conference is to be asked to determine. They deem it their duty to utter a solemn warning that possession gained by force will seriously prejudice the claims of those who use such means. It will create the presumption that those who employ force doubt the justice and validity of their claim and propose to substitute possession for proof of right and set up sovereignty by coercion rather than by racial or national preference and natural historical association. They thus put a cloud upon every evidence of title they may afterward allege and indicate their distrust of the Conference itself. Nothing but the most unfortunate results can ensue. If they expect justice, they must refrain from force and place their claims in unclouded good faith in the hands of the Conference of Peace.

But his words at this time, as I shall show later, were words in the wind.

The Peace Conference, therefore, must not be considered apart from its setting: not as a separate and detached body, calmly considering what was best for the world, but as a stormy transition period between war and war psychology, and the best arrangement for peace that could be made at a moment still dominated by the spirit of war. It was a time when men "wandered between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born."

## CHAPTER X

### ORGANIZATION OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

**W**HEN the nations came to grapple at Paris one of the first and most important questions to arise was Who should control?

Twenty-seven nations were there; which should control the Conference? Should the small and weak nations be accorded equality of representation with the great empires and Powers? Should enemy nations be admitted? If so, at what point in the proceedings?

These questions penetrate to the very core of the issue at Paris; in the discussion of them the real position of the nations and their representatives was developed; the true metal of each leader tested; the ultimate lines of action determined.

The most fundamental problem of control, remarkable as it may seem, was settled practically without discussion. It was assumed that the Conference was to be controlled by the allied nations without consulting Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey, or Bulgaria. This was, indeed, the inevitable corollary of the crushing victory achieved by the Allies and the bitter hatreds excited by a war of unprecedented ferocity. The peace was thus to be imposed, not negotiated. It was not to be a Congress where all the nations, former enemies as well as former friends, were represented, but a Conference alone of the Allies.

While this decision grew so naturally out of the conditions of the time as to occasion scarcely a ripple of comment, it was in reality of far-reaching importance; for it

imposed at once upon the Allies the heavy burden, one of the most difficult tests of human nature, of trying to do justice—or assuming to try!—while they themselves still smarted under a warping sense of monstrous injury, and of doing it without hearing or conferring with the other side; indeed, while still profoundly fearing, distrusting, hating the other side.

President Wilson had seen this problem, as he saw most of the problems of the war, with great clarity of vision. In the earlier days of the war, before such depths of bitterness had been reached, before America came in, and while yet the secret treaties represented the real foreign policies of the nations, he had spoken (in January, 1917) of “peace without victory.”<sup>1</sup> He evidently hoped that a negotiated peace might be possible—and there was, as we now know, some warrant at that time in hoping that it might be brought about—for he feared the results of an overwhelming victory and an imposed peace by either side.

I am seeking [he says] only to face realities. . . . Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand.

A sweeping victory indeed of the Allies at that time (and this applied still more forcibly to a German victory) with a literal application of the agreements already made by the diplomats, both secretly and openly, with no programme for settlements on new principles of justice, no vision of a new basis of international relationships, would have resulted, as the President clearly saw, only in new and more dangerous balances of power, and new and more jealous

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<sup>1</sup>Address to United States Senate, January 22, 1917.

combinations of interest; and eventually lay the foundations for new wars.

But the struggle deepened; the Germans were insanely determined to drive the logic of military force to its uttermost conclusion. In April, 1917, America came in, and it became more evident every month that the war would have to be fought to a finish. There would have to be what Lloyd George called a "knock-out blow." In short, it became evident that there must be, in spite of the dangers which the President had so plainly seen, a victor's peace. He accepted it as a reality, and began at once to devise a method, the foundations of which he had already laid, to meet it. He had to develop, and develop so powerfully that no nation could get away from them, policies of statesmanship which would make a victor's peace safe for the world. He must lift the whole psychology of the struggle to a higher plane; a moral plane. He must, by appealing to every idealistic force in the world, by using the great prestige of America, by boldly asserting American disinterestedness, commit the victors beforehand to a peace of justice and right, founded upon a new international coöperative organization to guarantee that peace.

His programme was both clear and simple: it rested upon historic American principles; and it convinced the world because it set forth plainly what men, in their innermost souls, knew to be true. Everyone remembers the building of that edifice of statecraft: the various addresses, the "points," the acceptance by nation after nation of the American programme, and at length the finale that led up to the Armistice. In one year's time the President had lifted the whole world to a new plane of conscience and of action. Even the leaders accepted his programme, if not with full confidence and understanding, at least as a great unifying influence.

Thus in November, 1918, America had the solemn promise of France and Great Britain and Italy—and Germany—that peace should be made on the basis of the Fourteen Points. They had accepted, not merely casually, but formally, the principle (the President made it the first of five principles in his address of September, 1918) that “the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just.”

The President—and America—sincerely believed that the nations of Europe meant what they said; believed not only that they intended to do exactly what they had promised to do, but that they could do it. On the very day of the Armistice—who that was there can ever forget it?—the President stood before Congress, the two Houses meeting together, to set forth the great news that the end of the war had come, “this tragical war whose consuming flames swept from one nation to another until all the world was on fire.” He gave Congress the great tidings that “armed imperialism is at an end . . . engulfed in black disaster.” And then he expressed his own belief and the belief of America that the victors could be trusted to make a peace on American principles.

The great nations which associated themselves to destroy it [the military power of Germany] have now definitely united in the common purpose to set up such a peace as will satisfy the longing of the whole world for disinterested justice, embodied in settlements which are based upon something much better and much more lasting than the selfish competitive interests of powerful States. There is no longer conjecture as to the objects the victors have in mind. They have a mind in the matter, and not only a mind but a heart also. Their avowed and concerted purpose is to satisfy and protect the weak as well as to accord their just rights to the strong. . . .

I am confident that the nations that have learned the discipline of

freedom and that have settled with self-possession to its ordered practice are now about to make the conquest of the world by the sheer power of example and of friendly helpfulness.

But he did not then understand—few Americans could, for they were far removed from the hatreds of Europe—how terribly the nations had suffered from the war, how bitter they had grown or how, like a canker, the spirit of war and of all the black passions let loose by war had eaten into and corrupted the soul of Europe; and how difficult it would be to keep alive the exalted spirit upon which America depended for the realization of the noble principles laid down. Nor did he realize that the same reaction—less violent, perhaps—was soon to take place in his own country. He saw later what a struggle it would be, but determined to fight it through, “agreeably if we can, disagreeably if we must,” as he told his associates on the *George Washington*.

So it was that this great initial decision, as I have said, was made almost without discussion. It was a foregone conclusion. But everyone who was really looking for a peace of justice at Paris, a permanent peace—and not merely an old, greedy, and revengeful peace—knew what a handicap the peacemakers thus lightly accepted at the very start.

But the next step in the problem of the control of the Conference led to lively skirmishes—the first blood shed in the Conference—on January 12. For there were no fewer than twenty-seven eager and expectant nations, big and little, come to Paris to help make the peace. There were not only the great empires and States that had won the war, but little fellows like Siam and Nicaragua and Liberia, that had shaken a fist at Germany, and new states like Poland and Czechoslovakia which had not yet got full command of their legs, but were full

of ambition. And it was a strange, and yet human, thing that some of these little States, the protection of which was one of the stated purposes of the war, at once became more clamorous, more imperialistic, than the great States that had fought the war. And every one of them, arguing the equal rights of small nations, desired an equal part in making the peace.

The question at once arose: Were all the twenty-seven to be taken in upon equal terms, or, if not, which should control the Conference, and how should it be done?

It will be seen that here was a problem that went to the heart of the matter, and two extremes of opinion at once emerged.

The first was frankly that of the old military and diplomatic leaders, which was to maintain the control absolutely in the hands of the four or five great Powers which, as Lloyd George said, "had run the war," and to regulate the settlements with reference, primarily, to the fears and desires of these great nations. Clemenceau, who was quite honestly the chief exponent of this idea, seeing nothing but the interest and security of France, was not willing at first even to consider consultation with the smaller nations. He put the whole matter in a nutshell during the discussion on the first day of the Conference:

M. CLEMENCEAU: Am I to understand from the statement of President Wilson that there can be no question, however important it may be for France, England, Italy, or America, upon which the representative of Honduras or of Cuba shall not be called upon to express his opinion? I have hitherto always been of the opinion that it was agreed that the five great Powers should reach their decisions upon important questions before entering the halls of the Congress to negotiate peace. If a new war should take place, Germany would not throw all her forces upon Cuba or upon Honduras, but upon France; it would always be upon France. I request then that we stand by

the proposals which have been made, proposals to the effect that meetings be held in which the representatives of the five countries mentioned shall participate, to reach decisions upon the important questions, and that the study of secondary questions be turned over to the commissions and the committees before the reunion of the conference.<sup>1</sup>

This was one extreme. At the other were those few who believed, at least theoretically, that all the nations should be brought into the Conference upon an equal basis, and, inferentially, that all should have an equal vote—Siam with the British Empire, Costa Rica with the United States. Mr. Lansing apparently held this position, although he did not argue it directly in the Conference:

The President, as I now see it [he says], should have insisted on everything being brought before the Plenary Conference. He would then have had the confidence and support of all the smaller nations because they would have looked up to him as their champion and guide. They would have followed him.<sup>2</sup>

The inference here is that the President in such a conference of twenty-seven nations could have formed a bloc of the small nations which “would have followed him,” and thus seized control of the Conference against the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan. Mr. Lansing’s assumption seems to have been that the small nations, thus fully represented in the Conference, would be somehow less greedy, less influenced by interest, than the great nations.

Here we have the two extremes: the first a militaristic idea based upon the assumption which Clemenceau was ever frank to make, paraphrasing Clausewitz, that “peace

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 12.

<sup>2</sup>“The Peace Negotiations,” by Robert Lansing, p. 219,

is but war pursued in another manner"; the second, a legalistic idea (deeply rooted in the ancient conception of the divine equality of monarchs) that all nations are equal. The first idea, however we may scorn it, was practicable—more, it was traditional—as a means of control at Paris; while the second, as a means of dealing with a turbulent world situation such as that which existed at Paris, was totally untried, and was not even seriously discussed except by Mr. Lansing secretly in his diary.

But the extreme legalists at Paris made President Wilson scarcely less impatient than the extreme militarists; both seemed so far from grasping, or understanding, his vision of the settlement. For his was a moral idea as contrasted with either a military or a legal idea. The whole approach, the spirit, was different. Real peace, in his view, could not rest upon either military force or legal mechanism, though both might have their place in bringing it about. It must be inspired by a new moral purpose, directed by dispassionate scientific inquiry, and guaranteed as a positive responsibility. He asked not so much a change of method, though he desired that, too, as a change of attitude. In his passion for the reality, the spirit of the matter, he was too careless of those elements of organization and procedure, the tactical usefulness of which the wilier diplomats clearly appreciated. They were thinking always narrowly in terms of the rights, the interests, the security, of their own States, while the President was thinking broadly of the duties, responsibilities, opportunities for service of the great States, especially of America. These two points of view, of course, are as far apart as the poles, and there can be no understanding of the Peace Conference without a clear recognition of the different approach. It was a bold application of one of the oldest and noblest moral principles that the President was mak-

ing to the turgid, corrupt, selfish, greedy relationships of the old diplomacy, but he believed then with his whole soul—and not even Paris was able to dim his conviction—that no real peace, no real justice, is ever again possible upon the old basis of interest; and that there must be a new attitude in the world before humankind can solve the life-and-death problem it now faces.

"You know," he told the citizens of Manchester, England, December 30, 1918, "that heretofore the world has been governed, or at any rate an attempt has been made to govern it, by partnerships of interest, and they have broken down. Interest does not bind men together; interest separates men. For the moment there is the slightest departure from the nice adjustment of interests, then jealousies begin to spring up. There is only one thing that can bind people together, and that is common devotion to right. Ever since the history of liberty began men have talked about their rights, and it has taken several hundreds of years to make them perceive that the principal part of right is duty, and that unless a man performs his full duty he is entitled to no right."

However battered this great idea may have been at Paris, it will rise and rise again to plague and purge the nations of the earth, as it has for so long irritated and purified the soul of man—for it is true. It is not only true, but, as the President was constantly urging at the Conference, it is the only truly practical plan. For example, he reiterated again and again the idea that it was not to the best interests of Italy to seize the shores of the Adriatic and Fiume and thus make enemies of the Jugoslavs, but rather to make friends of them, assist them, as a basis for the future prosperity and development of both countries. But the Italians preferred immediate gains, immediate safety, and were willing to risk the future.

When this problem of control arose on January 12, the President had again to face the reality of the situation. It was to be an imposed peace—although the conferees dodged that term throughout the Conference—and the great Powers, with their vast navies and armies still in the field and the world still thinking and feeling war, were in actual control, and must of necessity settle most of the problems—which were at first fully as much war problems as peace problems—that would arise. But these men, and the nations they represented, had accepted the American basis of peace; they had promised! They must be trusted and worked with. Moreover, the President had a profound sense of the rightness, the disinterestedness, as well as the power, of America; and a boundless determination, upon his own part, no matter what the other delegates might do, to adhere to his principles, to maintain the right attitude. He was too confident of the sheer power of a correct position.

At any rate, after arguing as against Clemenceau and Lloyd George for a greater opportunity for the smaller nations, he finally set forth his view of procedure as follows:

The President was in favour of holding informal conversations amongst the great powers, but believed that they must have an organization of all the nations, otherwise they would run the risk of having a small number of nations regulate the affairs of the world, and the other nations might not be satisfied.<sup>1</sup>

He was thinking not only of the immediate peace settlements, but of the future organization of the world, and this was practically the compromise adopted—a small conference of great powers with whom the final decisions rested (the Council of Ten, afterward the Council of Four),

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 12.

but an organization of all the powers, big and little, to meet in plenary sessions. The smaller powers were also admitted to many of the commissions, and they were heard freely where their interests were involved by the councils of the great Powers. It was a great advance over the method pursued at Vienna a hundred years before, for there the smaller powers did not even get a voice.

In accepting this method of control by the great Powers during the turbulent transition period, until the League of Nations, wherein all the nations, large and small, were to have representation, could be brought into being, the President felt himself well fortified in maintaining his position—though he did not then realize the power of the tradition nor the vitality of the interests of the old diplomacy. Consider what his warrants were. He had, first, as I have said, the solemn promise of the Allies—of these very leaders sitting at Paris—to make a peace based upon the accepted American principles; and, second, he had a vital sense of the power and disinterestedness of America to support him in his own unfaltering determination.

But besides these, there was another tremendous factor that he knew he could count upon. I have already referred to the preparatory development at Paris of the staff of experts and scientists which far exceeded that of any former conference. The primary assumption of the new kind of peace which was to be based upon accepted general principles of justice rather than upon old secret treaties and nationalistic greed and fear was that the application of these principles should be made by dispassionate scholars and experts, seeking only facts, desiring only the truth. It was for this reason that the President at every turn in the discussions, often against the fierce opposition of the other conferees, endeavoured to

have the problems first studied by the expert commissions. For he knew that the open, dispassionate, scientific spirit of inquiry applied to international problems was opposed to everything that the old devious diplomacy and the old militarism stood for; it was light against darkness.

This struggle, with the President trying to use the weapons of the new diplomacy against the old, marked every stage of the Conference. The old advanced its secret treaties, its strategic necessities, its nationalistic ambitions; and the new demanded always a study of the facts based upon the accepted principles. In this America led, because America was practically without immediate material interests to serve; Great Britain was next, because her interests were mostly satisfied before the Peace Conference began to sit. The French experts, though often of the highest learning, were too often politicians as well, and the Italians generally were against inquiry.

On February 1, for example, there arose in the Council of Ten a most significant and illuminating discussion of the two contrasting methods of control. The problem of the complicated Rumanian territorial claims was before the Conference—then sitting in a Council of Ten with President Wilson and Secretary Lansing representing the United States.

After hearing the statement of M. Bratiano, the Rumanian Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, having consulted with President Wilson, said "it was extremely difficult to decide questions of boundaries on statements, however lucid, made in the course of a Conversation," and he thereupon proposed a commission of two experts from each of the four great Powers to study the problems involved in the Rumanian settlement and even suggested authorizing them "to consult the representatives of the peoples concerned."

M. Orlando, the Italian Premier, at once took alarm and fell back upon the secret treaty of the Allies with Rumania.

He did not wish, [he said] to defend secret treaties which, indeed, were now out of fashion; but a treaty having been signed by Italy, France and Great Britain, he could make no distinction between a secret treaty and a public treaty.

He then attacked the whole idea of the use of specialists:

Mr. Lloyd George's resolution said that specialists would be appointed. What kind of specialists? If it was intended to appoint specialists on the Rumanian question, he himself had none; and they would be difficult to find. But even then he would ask: What branch of the Rumanian question should these specialists represent? Should they be geographical, historical, strategical, or ethnographical specialists? . . . Further, the resolution said that the Committee would consult the representatives of the people concerned. The experts would thus, in fact, become examining magistrates. Mr. Lloyd George's proposal thus became a very serious one, since the experts would constitute the Court of First Instance and the delegates of the Great Powers the Final Court of Appeal. He failed to see how such a procedure would expedite matters. In his opinion, it necessarily meant delay, especially if the experts decided that the inquiry must take place *in situ*.

It was very alarming to the Italians in this case, and to other nations in many later cases, where their interests were involved, to think of having investigations made by impartial scientific commissions. Baron Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Minister, added his weight to that of his chief, expressing the view that "the experts might find themselves compelled to go to the spot to consult the representatives of the people concerned." He did not want to have the people who were concerned consulted!

President Wilson then expressed his view:

President WILSON . . . said that he was seeking enlightenment, and this would no doubt be afforded by a convincing presentation by the experts. If the resolution proposcd by Mr. Lloyd George did not receive acceptance, he would find himself compelled to fight the question merely on the views expressed by the American experts; but he would prefer that these conclusions should be corrected by the views of the French, British, and Italian experts.

He also laid down at this time his general policy regarding the use of the scientists. He said:

Ever since the United States of America had entered the war, he had had a body of scholars continuously studying such questions of fact as racial aspects, historical antecedents, and economic and commercial elements: the two latter being of very great importance in many of the questions under dispute, as had been realized in the case of the Banat. Furthermore, it must be remembered that however complete their confidence might be in the delegates of Rumania, Serbia, and other countries, who would present claims, these delegates were merely advocates, and they made opposite claims as to the right inferences to be drawn from facts. They did not represent their facts in the same way, and there would always be something that was not quite clear. As the United States of America were not bound by any of the [secret] treaties in question, they were quite ready to approve a settlement on a basis of facts. But the claimants did not always restrict themselves even to the limits set by Treaties and their claims frequently exceeded what was justified by the Treaties.

The resolutions adopted at this meeting of the Conference regarding the use of experts are so important as a model for later resolutions of reference that they are here reproduced:

It was agreed that the questions raised in M. Bratiano's statement on the Rumanian territorial interests in the Peace settlement should be referred for examination in the first instance by an expert committee, composed of two representatives each of the United States of America, the British Empire, France and Italy.

It shall be the duty of this Committee to reduce the questions for

decision within the narrowest possible limits, and to make recommendations, for a just settlement.

The Committee is authorized to consult the representatives of the peoples concerned.

More and more as the discussions advanced, important problems were assigned to the experts for investigation and recommendation; and it soon became the practice, where the experts of all the nations were in agreement, for the Four or the Five to accept their findings without further comment. Probably three quarters, perhaps a larger proportion, of the treaty provisions were settled in this way. So important was the work of these experts that one thought of them sometimes as a kind of impromptu or informal parliament studying problems and working out solutions to submit to the heads of the States for their approval or veto.

There were no fewer than fifty-eight of these technical commissions, upon which sat the specialists of the four or five great nations, to consider every kind of territorial, economic, ethnographic, and strategic problem, and these hard-worked commissions held 1,646 meetings. Also, in spite of the objections to the proposals when first made, there were twenty-six investigations made by commissions on the spot, consulting the wishes of the people concerned. A number of commissions, like that on Syria, were sent out by the Americans alone, though vigorously opposed by the French, in order to fortify their own knowledge of the situation under discussion.

The decisions of the experts were not always followed. The passions of the war were still too sharp, the political and military desires or necessities of the powers too insistent, to accept always a cool, scientific judgment. Sometimes the experts disagreed sharply among themselves, as in the Italian settlements, and in some cases

experts became as partisan and as politically minded as any diplomat; and in some, the experts assigned were not really experts at all, but diplomatic advocates of the interests of the nation concerned.

Then, too, the major problems of the peace, such as the French, Italian, and Japanese claims, were not referred to expert commissions for preliminary study. The interested powers combined to prevent it. These problems were discussed in secret councils according to the traditional, approved practices of diplomacy. Yet the methods of the new order could not be wholly ignored in meetings where its foremost advocate was present and had to be convinced. Claims must be presented on a basis of right as well as of interest; the wishes of peoples figured more largely in the arguments than the balance of power. Maps and statistics were freely introduced into the discussion; and the experts were constantly consulted, by separate delegations or in joint committees. Yet the oil and water of the two systems never quite mixed. The experts, even the Americans in closest touch with President Wilson, were kept in the dark concerning these inner controversies in which their services were enlisted. On the other hand, interest often proved, after all, the deciding factor in the settlement of those controversies.

But the Conference got further away from mere dictatorial methods of control and nearer to the methods of scientific and dispassionate inquiry upon which the settlements of the future—if they are to be lasting—must rest than any former conference.

Thus while the control of the Peace Conference rested in the hands of the four or five great Powers, yet the use of that control according to the needs and interests of the old diplomacy was profoundly changed and tempered from

within by President Wilson, who fought stubbornly against heavy odds, throughout the Conference, for his vision of a new use of national or world power. He believed as much in the reality of the power of great states as Clemenceau. "Where the great force lies," he said, "there must be the sanction of peace,"<sup>1</sup> but his great message to the world was that this power should be used for the service, not the oppression, of humanity, for the benefit of the world, not the interests of particular states, in the performance of duties, not the assertion of rights. He thought it "excellent to have a giant's strength but tyrannous to use it like a giant."

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, Seventh Plenary Session.

## CHAPTER XI

### STRUGGLE FOR A PROGRAMME OF PROCEDURE—THE FRENCH PLAN—WILSON'S "LIST OF SUBJECTS"

THE Peace Conference in many of its aspects was only a political meeting upon a vast stage. It was inevitable that there should be a struggle in the beginning, not only to control the organization, as described in the last chapter, but to make its programme of procedure. No one knew better than the diplomats at Paris the truth in the old maxim that "all great political problems are at bottom problems of procedure"; each knew how much depended upon securing the adoption of his own plan or programme.

Mr. Lansing devotes an entire chapter in his book to the "lack of an American programme" and blames President Wilson. M. Tardieu, in his book, accuses both Americans and British, who, he assumes, have no plan of their own, of defeating the French plan, and attributes it to "the instinctive repugnance of the Anglo-Saxons to the systematized constructions of the Latin mind."<sup>1</sup>

What both Mr. Lansing and M. Tardieu mean, of course, by a programme is a scheme of procedure carefully worked out beforehand, based upon legal precedents, and adopted by the Conference.

In this sense the Peace Conference never had a programme—no nation had one, except the French. Yet nothing is clearer than the struggle over the matter of procedure; the plan on which the Peace Conference was to

<sup>1</sup>"The Truth about the Treaty," by André Tardieu, p. 91.

Washington, M. Jusserand, going down from the French Embassy to the State Department and carrying in his own hand (as the correspondence shows) what he calls "a preliminary study" of the various problems that may arise in the Peace Conference. While this document was dated November 29, and was cabled from Paris, it must have been in preparation while the American soldiers were still storming machine gun nests in the Argonne.<sup>1</sup>

"My Government," writes M. Jusserand in this memorandum of transmittal, "would be glad to know whether the plans of studies suggested by it, and the principles upon which they rest, meet with the general approval of the American Government."

It would have been a great thing at this stage for France if America had approved the "plan" and "principles" here suggested.

On December 2, while the President was in a whirl of preparation for the sailing of the American peace argosy to Europe, this document was placed in his hands and he took it with him on the *George Washington*.

Now, this French document did two things and did them well. It laid down the French idea of the tactics for conducting the Peace Conference, and second, it revealed, cleverly and yet clearly enough, what the French really expected the peace settlements to be.

We discover in the first paragraph that the French, in seeking plans for Paris, are looking backward to the models of the old congresses of Europe: "congresses of the old order," as President Wilson had called them.

"The French Government," it says, "upon examination of the Congresses of Vienna, 1814-15; Paris, 1856,

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 7, for complete text of this basic document, with letters of transmission.

and Berlin, 1878, has taken up the various problems raised" by the coming Peace Conference at Paris.

The plan then proposed follows the traditional models. There is to be a congress with the enemy powers represented in it. But before this congress meets, on the "arrival of President Wilson in Paris in the middle of December," there is to be a Conference of the "four great Powers [for this plan leaves out Japan] to agree among themselves upon the conditions of the peace preliminaries to be imposed severally on the enemy without any discussion with him." The principal questions that are raised are even to be "settled directly among the great Powers without calling upon any committee to discuss them." And it is remarked especially that "this applies to Colonial affairs which essentially concern England and France."

After everything has been decided, territorial lines settled, colonies distributed, indemnities fixed, then the peace congress itself is to meet. This peace congress is to have representatives from all enemy and neutral nations—including the small nations—but as the document says, "the great victorious powers alone will attend all its sessions . . . as for the neutrals and States in formation, they may be called when their own interests are at stake."

Finally, after all the material problems have been settled, there is to be a general meeting of the congress, attended by all the nations, and this, it is naïvely remarked, "could place itself, as has sometimes been done in the past, under the invocation of some of the great principles leading to justice, morals, and liberty, which would be proclaimed at its very opening." In other words, after a settlement is completely made on the old order of diplomacy and each great nation has

got all it can get, there is to be a pious statement of "principles leading to justice, morals, and liberty." This part of the congress is to discuss the organization of a society of nations.

This was, in general, the plan the French desired and struggled hard to have accepted in the early days of the Peace Conference, but which, according to M. Tardieu's explanation—it is good enough to bear repetition—failed owing to "that repugnance of the Anglo-Saxons to the systematized constructions of the Latin mind."

The President had two courses open to him: one to oppose the adoption of the French plan, the other to go forward with a plan of his own. He did both.

The President feared the adoption of a cut-and-dried programme on the old diplomatic models of Vienna and Paris and Berlin, based upon interest and strategic necessity as primary considerations, and relegating the discussion of a league of nations to some dim future congress to be held after all the spoils of the war had been divided. He had new general principles to apply, and modern agencies, such as the expert commissions, to use. He had also a much keener consciousness than any other leader at Paris, except Lloyd George, of the new power of public opinion in world affairs and of the presence and pressure of an eager press. In his preoccupation with his new plans, his vision of a new kind of peace and his determination to bring it about, he was undoubtedly not as much concerned as he should have been with the forms and the traditions, or with the methods which, after all, must be used in considering the "items" of the peace.

And this was what disturbed a man like Mr. Lansing, with his legalistic and conventional mind. Mr. Lansing, although he bitterly excoriates the old diplomacy, was

essentially a diplomat of the old school. His look was honestly backward toward precedent; he could never understand, much less appreciate, the President's type of mind—prophetic, creative, struggling to meet new realities with new instrumentalities—a mind intensely interested in the substance and spirit of the matter, too little in the method. Thus to Mr. Lansing, when there was no programme written down, there was no programme.

But that the President went stumbling blindly into the Conference "without a programme of any sort or even a list of subjects," as Mr. Lansing says,<sup>1</sup> is of course absurd. He knew exactly what he wanted and what he intended to do. A week before the first session he requested his fellow commissioners to furnish him with a list of subjects to be considered first at the Conference, and in reply had the following letter (dated January 8):

Dear Mr. PRESIDENT: In compliance with your desire to be furnished with a list of the subjects which, in our opinion, should be taken up first at our conferences, we beg to suggest that we now proceed to consider the following questions in the order given below:

1. Representation.
2. The League of Nations.
3. Reparation.
4. New States.
5. Territorial Adjustments.
6. Colonial Possessions.

We are, dear Mr. President,

Respectfully yours,

ROBERT LANSING,

HENRY WHITE,

E. M. HOUSE,

TASKER H. BLISS,

Commissioners Plenipotentiary.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Peace Negotiations," by Robert Lansing, p. 199.

On January 13, when this problem came up to be settled in the Council of Ten, Mr. Lansing also being present, the President said:

He hoped those present would not agree on any fixed order of discussion. For instance, he believed it more important at the moment that those present should consider the whole question of treatment of Russia.

He therefore submitted his list of subjects, following exactly the advice of the other American commissioners (except in the matter of representation, which had already been argued by the council):

League of Nations.

Reparation.

New States.

Boundaries.

Colonies.

He suggested that this list should be referred at once to each national delegation, and that their views be obtained as a basis of future discussions. This seemed to him a reasonable method of developing the views of each group and arriving at something that could be discussed. On the very first day of the Conference the Russian and Polish questions, both of vast intricacy and importance, had been precipitated into the conversations, to say nothing of the military problems of the renewal of the Armistice. He did not see how it could be practicable in a turbulent world to follow any cut-and-dried-plan. As he said later regarding another aspect of the same situation: "The question had to be studied like a problem of dynamics concerning the action of forces in a body in unstable equilibrium."

Thus the Conference improvised as it went along and met each problem as it arose. It was the inevitable

corollary of the adoption of small secret conferences of the great Powers—especially when the Four met alone, when an elaborate plan of procedure would have been absurd. This informality had both great advantages and great disadvantages. It no doubt enabled the Four to expedite business, to cut through red tape, to get things done. It also enabled the President to press at every point his general principles, to encourage the use of expert commissions, and to get a clearer field for the consideration of the League of Nations.

On the other hand, it had real disadvantages. It tended to throw great power into the hands of the chairman, M. Clemenceau, for he could dictate to a large extent the subjects which should come up from time to time, he had the power—which he exercised freely in both small and large conferences—of limiting debate, setting the time of adjournments, and so on. It also enabled that extraordinary virtuoso, Lloyd George, to produce, often quite unexpectedly, the most remarkable histrionic effects, as when one day he took the Council of Four by storm by staging the Moslem world to prove a point he wished to make. He brought in the striking group of British Mohammedan leaders, strangely clad in combinations of their native costumes and the uniforms of the British Army, and one after another, in dramatic fashion, they presented the case of Islam with reference to the settlements in Turkey. At another time, and quite as precipitately, he staged the British Empire before the Council of Ten, in the persons of the Prime Ministers of all the British Colonies. And the British Empire can be most impressive when properly staged!

No one could equal Lloyd George in such devices as these, although Clemenceau at one time, quite without warning and much to Lloyd George's discomfiture,

brought in the Belgian delegation to argue their colonial claims in Africa and incidentally to support the French colonial claims as against the British. If President Wilson had none of these arts, he was also little swayed by the practice of them by the others. A great disadvantage also lay in the confusion which existed during all the early weeks of the Conference as to whether there was to be a preliminary peace, or armistice extensions to include some part of the peace arrangements, or a final and definitive treaty. And, finally, it was a great disadvantage not to have had the discussions of the Peace Conference wholly separated from those of the Supreme War Council, even though the same men, or some of them, sat in both. Nevertheless, it was, as Tardieu says, the Anglo-Saxon method.

So much for the matter of programme in the general conferences—the Councils of Ten and of Four—which dealt throughout with the items of the peace rather than the broader principles of the peace.

To have a definite programme which would result in dividing up the world in the old way was an easy thing; but to have a definite programme for devising instrumentalities for a new order, based upon principles new to international relationships—especially when the spirit of the new order was only dimly adumbrated in men's minds—that was quite another and far more difficult problem.

Where the President's own intense convictions as to what was really the most important purpose of the Paris Conference were concerned—the realization of the American principles of the peace—no man at Paris had clearer or more definite ideas of what he intended to do. He had begun thinking and speaking upon his project long before the war closed; he had worked out—as will be fully described in a later chapter—his scheme for a league

of nations. In that Covenant he outlined specifically what he meant by certain of his "Points," notably the one on limitation of armaments. He presented it at Paris early in the Conference. He became chairman of the commission to study and report upon it. It was the most important commission at Paris, often rivalling in interest the Council of Ten or of Four. He secured the adoption of the plan for making the League of Nations an integral part of the treaty of peace as early as the second plenary session, January 25, and throughout the Conference he hewed to the line in the realization of what he considered to be American principles with unabated determination. If the plan was not all written down beforehand, it was none the less a plan and a programme, and probably as definite a one as could be devised for the exploration of a diplomatic wilderness hitherto unpene-trated. It is not the intent here to describe this struggle—that will come later—but merely to point out the definite-ness of the President's programme for obtaining the sub-stance of the things that he thought really mattered—not the "items" of the peace, but the creative principles of it.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE BATTLE OF THE LANGUAGES: ENGLISH VERSUS FRENCH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE TREATY

**I**S NOT the return to the past," asks Clemenceau, "the first impulse of countries whose power is founded upon the force of traditions?"<sup>1</sup>

It was the French who were the great defenders of the old practices of European statecraft; and it was America chiefly that demanded change and sought new methods to meet new realities.

While the problems of procedure were before the Conference, an impassioned argument took place regarding the choice of an official language for the Treaty. The predominance of their language in diplomacy has ever been a mark of power upon which the French have set great store, and this was a battle royal between French and English.

This discussion of January 15 is at once so symbolical of the rise of a new influence in the world and in itself so typical of the give and take of the secret councils at Paris, that it is here set down complete. They were discussing Section 8 of the proposed French plan of procedure in which French was made the official language of the Treaty:

M. PICHON pointed out that French has invariably been used as the language for the standard texts of treaties. The proposal that French

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<sup>1</sup>"The Truth about the Treaty," by André Tardieu, from *Introduction by M. Clemenceau.*

be the official language did not mean that delegates should not have the right to use their own language. The particular reason for having one language as the official language is that there may be assured but one document containing the standard text. There has been no exception to the use of French for that purpose. M. Pichon referred particularly to the last conference at The Hague. Moreover, this requirement would not affect the right of delegates to use their own language, such as English, which has the widest circulation in the world.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that he was very sorry not to be able to accept the text proposed for this section. He wished to say that it was not a matter of prejudice, but for the first time we now had the case of the United States taking part in a European Peace and this made with the British Empire a majority of the Associated Governments having English as their official language. He thought M. Pichon's point about a single document a good one, but it was interesting to recall that both English and Dutch are used side by side in South Africa, and English and French in Canada. In both countries all documents are published in both languages, and both hold. This is more important than in the case of treaties, where differences arise on questions of principle, rather than shades of meaning. In these instances, questions come up in connection with the interpretation of legal documents, and he knew of no case where any difficulty had arisen. Consequently, inasmuch as the majority of the Alliance use the English language, he proposed an amendment to Section VIII, making English as well as French an official language of the Conference.

M. SONNINO stated that he preferred that one language be used, for if two languages were chosen, the Italian language would appear to be placed in an inferior position.

Mr. WILSON observed that all recognized the historical claim for French to be made the official language, but there were some circumstances which he believed should not be overlooked. For instance, the official language of the East is English, and diplomatic documents are in that language. This is not a matter of discrimination, as M. Sonnino has said, but a matter of generality of use. It seemed to him that a language which is the official language of the greater part of the world should be the official language of the Conference. He did not, however, propose that French be excluded. He only asked

that it be considered in a preferential manner, as compared with Italian.

M. PICHON referred to the fact that the resolutions of the Versailles Conference were in French.

M. CLEMENCEAU admitted that he was considerably embarrassed. He saw the justice of the claim that the English language was the language most commonly spoken throughout the world, and that it has carried civilization and liberal institutions wherever it has penetrated, but he would point out that French has taken the place of Latin, which, in its time, was the official language of the world, and, moreover, it has the advantage of extreme precision. Nevertheless, he had the greatest desire to give each language its full right. Consequently, if English is admitted, it would not be right to exclude Italian.

He therefore proposed that there should be three official languages, and if a question of interpretation should ever arise, the French text would rule.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that this would make French the official language, or, as Mr. Wilson suggested, the standard language.

Mr. WILSON inquired whether the official minutes would then be kept in all three languages.

Mr. BALFOUR requested that M. Clemenceau be good enough to submit his proposal in writing, so that he might see the actual wording of the clause, and that this should be presented for consideration at the afternoon meeting.

The conversations were resumed at 2:30 p. m.

M. PICHON submitted a new text for Article VIII, proposed by M. Clemenceau. (English, French, and Italian to be the official languages—French the standard text.)

Mr. WILSON asked permission to present the following aspects of the matter: French has been the language of European diplomacy, but we have now reached the beginning of a new era, and enter upon world diplomacy. It is hardly decisive to follow European precedence which gives the French language this position. The language of the other side of the Globe is English, and this is a congress of the world. Moreover, the greater part of the people represented in this congress use the English language. He sincerely doubted whether any American when looking at this document in French would be satisfied that it was an exact expression of the decision of the Conference.

As regards the arguments for the Italian language, he would venture to point out that it was spoken by a limited part of what might be called the constituency of the Conference.

If English and French were placed on a parity there would be a perfect concurrence of mind of those who understood the French version with those who used the English version.

Mr. WILSON also pointed out that it was proposed to have a permanent Secretariat for the Conference, and this was one more reason why the documents of this Secretariat should be in both languages. Moreover, should another minority language be admitted, others would have to be included also.

He ventured again to lay stress upon the fact that a new element has been introduced in the diplomacy of the world by the entrance of a new power speaking English. For these reasons, he urged that both English and French be made the official languages of the Conference.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE submitted a proposal providing for the use of French and English as the official languages of the Conference, and for the reference to the League of Nations for decision of any question of interpretation that may arise.

M. PICHON remarked that this was not the first time that the United States and other States of both North and South America had adopted French as the official language. He referred to the conferences at The Hague where, according to precedent, French had been adopted as the official language by all those present.

In answer to the contention that The Hague Conferences had served no purpose and had been disregarded, M. PICHON replied that it was not the fault of France that this had occurred.

In conclusion he referred to President Wilson's statement that France in this matter had an historical privilege. He believed that President Wilson would be the last not to recognize that privilege. In view of what France had gone through, and in view of all her sufferings, he thought it strange that the first act of this conference should be to withdraw from her that right. He pointed out that M. Clemenceau had suggested a formula which seemed to meet the desires of the President, and still left France her privilege.

M. SONNINO pointed out that while it was true that Italy had not a majority of population, nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that she had contributed her full share to the War, and had put into the Field from four to five million soldiers. He repeated that if an excep-

tion were to be made to the historical rule, and Italy were left out, it would be a distinct slight against her. He wished to support M. Clemenceau's proposal. Mr. WILSON spoke as follows:

"My sentiments would respond at once to M. Pichon's appeal—not only my own, but also those of all the people of the United States—but I felt obliged to leave sentiment out by views of practical effects. The look of this Conference is to the future. We are trying to draw now together to do away with contest. These documents which we are to draw up and sign will be the basis and life of government all over the world. The interpretation of them will affect situations which are to come, and in such interpretations a preponderance of the peoples of the world will use the English text. I cannot refrain from reminding myself that we are engaged in a practical business, and I am bound to lay matters of precedent aside. What will be the languages, in time to come, which will be easiest to interpret? French and English. The world will find it easier to interpret French and English texts, far easier than any other. Let me say that it is not in my heart to show disrespect. Let us so act that the future generations will say: 'These men had hard common sense, and put practical interests to the front.'"

After some general discussion the Chairman read the text of Article VIII, and put the question as to whether it was approved. He referred to the fact that French had been the official language of the Versailles Conference of the Inter-Allied High Commission.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that when the Commission sat in London, English had been the official text. He reverted again to his former argument that English was the official language of a great section of the world. He laid stress on the point that the forthcoming Conference was to lay out a new era, and inasmuch as it was now necessary to deal with realities, he gave his support to President Wilson's appeal, although he found it most difficult to resist the appeal of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

M. CLEMENCEAU believed that those present were more in accord than it appeared. Mr. Wilson had mentioned the part taken in the War by English-speaking people. This is true. He frankly recognized the debt which France owed to the men who speak English. Like Mr. Wilson, he was ready to face new problems. It was not only necessary to try, but also to succeed. This War, however, took place in France. It should not be forgotten that his proposal was

that the official text shall be English, French, and Italian, and he, a Frenchman, had proposed it. If it was now argued that the English-speaking people must be able to read the text, he admitted it, and has proposed English, French, and Italian. The mere fact that a small text is hidden away in the archives at The Hague will not make any difference if it is in the French language. As regards Italian I believe that not only now, but in the future, it will be necessary to have many more officially stamped texts, but from the merely practical point of view there should be but one text in the hands of the judge. There should be but one standard to refer to.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE observed that the question now under consideration was whether there shall be but one text, not two or three. If the French text is the standard for scrutinization, the British delegate would have to examine it very carefully. Why should it not be well to have two or three official languages, and if there is a dispute, instead of referring it to a text, why not leave it to the League to decide? In Canada, if the judge says that the texts are different the matter is referred to Parliament. Such cases will undoubtedly arise, and it would be appropriate and preferable to have the matter referred to the League rather than to a text. Why could not the French language, so to speak, serve for all Latin peoples, and the English text represent the others? He suggested, therefore, that it would be better to proceed to the consideration of the amendment first proposed, that is to say, that there be two official texts, English and French. If that be accepted, Baron Sonnino's proposal might then be taken into consideration.

Mr. WILSON thought it of interest to remind those present that in treaties between the United States and France the text is in English and French. The Senate of the United States approves the English text. Therefore, so far as the United States is concerned, the English text would rule. Should there be a disagreement, the matter would be discussed and an agreement reached between the two governments.

M. CLEMENCEAU observed that the Versailles Treaty was in French alone. Mr. WILSON thought that this treaty had lapsed.

M. PICHON repeated that in all international agreements the French text ruled. Even at the Congress of Berlin, French was used. Mr. WILSON pointed out that he did not dispute the fact that French has been the standard, but as to the Congress of Berlin, he would

observe that America was not represented. M. CLEMENCEAU stated that he could not go further than the amendment he had proposed.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE suggested that if that were to be the case it would be better to have no official text, and each country would only understand the text which its representatives signed.

M. CLEMENCEAU observed that if so much importance were attached to such small matters it was truly a bad beginning for the society of the League of Nations.

MR. WILSON observed that he was extremely sorry that this aspect had been given to the question. He did not like to leave a question of this sort where it then rested, and suggested that the delegates think the matter over, sleep on it, and take it up at the next meeting.<sup>1</sup>

The upshot of the matter was that English and French were both made official and the Treaty was printed with English on one page and French on the next. It was one of many evidences of the shifting of power from the old to the new. Indeed, English was the dominant language at the Conference. A large proportion of the foreign delegates, like the Chinese, Japanese, South Americans, and others, spoke it as their second language, and of the Council of the five heads of the great Powers only Orlando of Italy spoke no English, while only two, Clemenceau and Orlando, spoke French. Clemenceau and Sonnino (Foreign Minister of Italy) spoke English fluently, and Baron Makino of Japan spoke it well.

When the Three (the President, Mr. Lloyd George, and M. Clemenceau) were in sessions alone, as they often were during the later days of the Conference, the conversation was wholly in English. At other times, and in all of the larger conferences, the speeches had to be interpreted from English to French and French to English. This work was done by a remarkable Frenchman, Professor Mantoux. I have seen him sit through a long conference,

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<sup>1</sup>From Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 15.

and as each speech was made in English, rapidly make notes in French, or if the speech was in French, his notes were in English; and when the speaker finished, he arose immediately and repeated his speech at length—often eloquently—and with such accuracy, such complete understanding, that he was rarely corrected.

Italian was occasionally heard at the conferences, and German, of course, at the single meeting with the Germans at Versailles, but other languages almost never. When the picturesque Emir Feisal, the delegate from Arabia, who had only his native Arabian, spoke at a conference, he was interpreted in English by Colonel Lawrence. Venizelos, the Greek Premier, spoke French to perfection.

No doubt this decision to make English coequal with French as the diplomatic language of the world hurt French sensibilities and especially hurt Clemenceau. But Clemenceau met this and other setbacks at Paris, for which he was later bitterly criticized, like the wise old philosopher he was.

The state of mind of our allies [he explained (as quoted by M. Tardieu)], is not necessarily the same as our own, and when we are not in agreement with them it is unjust to blame those who do not succeed in convincing them or to blame them for evil intentions which are not in their hearts.

What are you going to do about it? Each of us lives encased in his own past. Auguste Comte said that we live dead men's lives and it is true. . . .

There should be no surprise at the resistance we have encountered. The one said or thought, "I am English," the other thought "I am American." Each had as much right to say so as we had to say we are French. Sometimes it is true they made me suffer cruelly. But such discussions must be entered into not with the idea of breaking off, or smashing the serving tables and the china, as was Napoleon's wont, but with the idea of making one's self understood.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"The Truth about the Treaty," by Andre Tardieu, pp. 95-96,



PART III  
THE LEAGUE AND THE PEACE



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ORIGIN OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS—HISTORY OF THE COVENANT—WILSON'S DRAFTS

“My ancestors were troublesome Scotchmen and among them were some of that famous group that were known as the Covenanters. Very well, there is the Covenant of the League of Nations. I am a covenanter.”—PRESIDENT WILSON at Kansas City, September, 1919.

THE most vital struggle of the Peace Conference was the effort to bring into being a league of nations, and relate it definitely to the Treaty of Peace. It was the climax of the conflict between the New World—in its larger meaning—and the Old, the chief champion of the one being America, of the other, France.

It is necessary first to look into the origins of this important and significant document—the Covenant—which the Americans were now fighting for. No subject before the world, in the years from 1918 to the present day, has been more widely discussed than this. A presidential campaign in America turned upon it, the policies of Europe and Asia have been profoundly affected by it. The League that grew out of it has now been accepted by fifty-one nations and is regularly functioning. Every important nation in the world, except America, Germany, and Russia, has joined it. Whatever one's view of it—and views in America vary from bitter execration to the most ardent support—it cannot be denied that this docu-

ment had within it strange potencies, capable of newly stimulating or dividing the thought of the world.

Where, then, did it come from? Who made it, and how? What forces lay behind it?

No collection of documents among all those the President brought back with him from Paris is more complete, or important, or interesting, than those dealing with the League of Nations. Here are all the various drafts, correspondence, memoranda; nearly the complete equipment of the President's mind. Here are his own tentative notes in shorthand, or written on his own typewriter—he never discarded a scrap of paper—giving strangely the impression of one thinking not aloud, but in notes and memoranda. These documents not only deal with the origin of the League during 1918 and early 1919, but illuminate the discussions of the entire Conference.

One fact arises above all others in studying these interesting documents: practically nothing—not a single idea—in the Covenant of the League was original with the President. His relation to it was mainly that of editor or compiler, selecting or rejecting, recasting or combining the projects that came in to him from other sources. He had two great central and basic convictions: that a league of nations was necessary; that it must be brought into immediate existence. In voicing these he felt himself only a mouthpiece of the people of the world.

All the brick and timber of the structure was old, as old as the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution—older by far! He was adapting them to the new end he had in view. No leader can be original in ideas; he can be original only in expression and in action. Lincoln was not original in his idea that slavery should be abolished: what upset his world was his decision to abolish it. The idea of the League was not original

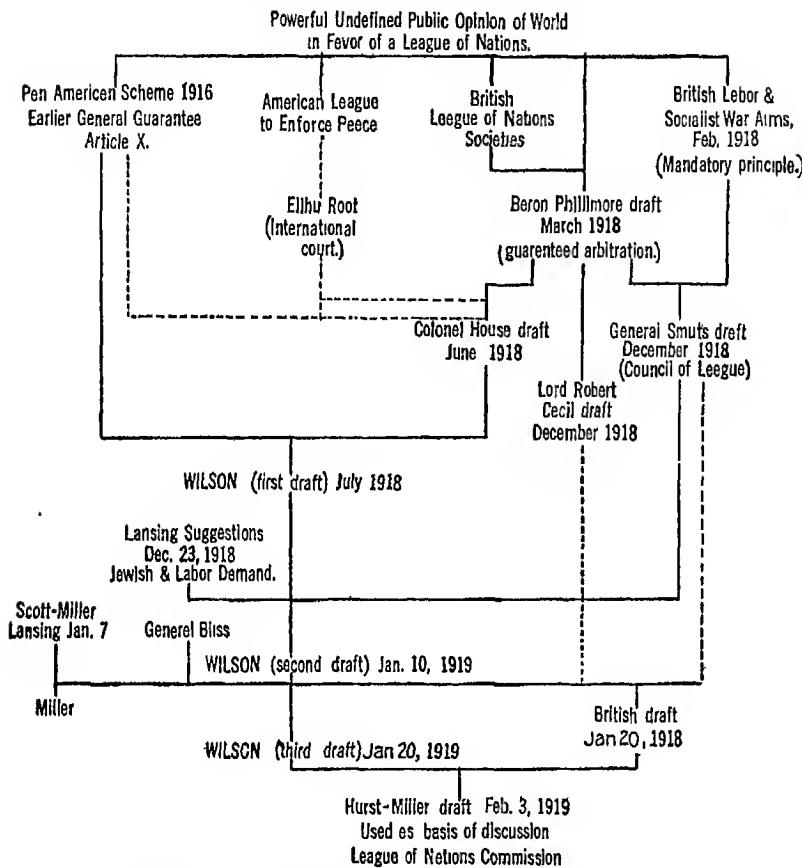


Chart showing the origins of the League of Nations Covenant

with Wilson: what upset the world at Paris was his determination to realize it immediately and as a part of this peace.

By the middle of 1918, the last year of the war, the project of a league of nations had taken definite shape in the minds of many thoughtful men, both in America and in Europe. Early in the spring of that year the British Government, acting through Mr. Balfour, had appointed a committee of eminent international lawyers to draw

up a basis for a definite plan. The report of this committee, made on March 29, 1918, was sent, in May, to the War Cabinet, the Dominion Premiers, and the President of the United States. This document of eighteen articles, known as the Phillimore report, from the chairman, Baron Phillimore, became the foundation of the League's constitution.<sup>1</sup> It was no new creation, any more than the plans which sprang from it. It formulated in legal, diplomatic phraseology what seemed most practical in the schemes already before the world.

Wilson was, of course, in touch with the general currents of thought then sweeping the world regarding a future league. In America there was the League to Enforce Peace and later the League of Free Nations Society. In England there was the old League of Nations Society, headed by Sir W. H. Dickinson, and there were active new organizations. The League had been made a part of the war aims of the Inter-Allied Labour and Socialistic Conference of February, 1918, which also resolved that it should be made a part of the coming settlements. The idea swept England more completely than it did America. In a report to the State Department of the United States sent by the writer from England on June 30, 1918, occur these words:

Interest in the League of Nations has now become a veritable flood. It is being discussed everywhere and in all kinds of publications. The *Daily Mail* snipes at it and there are letters of opposition and doubt in other papers, but even the *Times* now appears to give guarded approval and the House of Lords has accepted a motion approving "the principle of a League of Nations" and commanding to the Government "a study of the conditions required for its realization." The most surprising thing of all was the solemn speech the other day in the House of Lords by Lord Curzon, who gave a somewhat half-hearted

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 8, for full text of the Phillimore report.

support to a more or less half-hearted League. Viscount Grey's pamphlet has had a most favourable reception. The Labour Conference was for the proposal in vigorous language. The forces that are against it are, as always, the old unimaginative Conservative and Imperialistic groups, which are much stronger than appear on the surface.

When President Wilson reached the point, then, of studying concretely the subject of a league of nations, in June, 1918, he turned to the Phillimore report, which had been sent to him in the month before. As a matter of fact, the essential ideas of the Phillimore report were much the same as those of the programme of the American League to Enforce Peace. These were:

That no nation should declare war without first submitting its cause of quarrel to some form of arbitration or conciliation.

That the nations of the world should agree to unite in various measures of punishment, including the use of armed force, against any nation that should go to war without so submitting its case.

These provisions which have passed into Articles XIII to XVI of the present Covenant of the League constitute a species of indirect guarantee. All members are pledged to aid any one of them which may be attacked either by surprise or against the judgment of an international body on the rights of the case.

Beyond these points the Phillimore report contained little that was definite. The organ of conciliation which was to operate as an alternative to the traditional methods of arbitration was to be simply a "Conference of the Allied States," meeting whenever its services were required; and its decisions, to operate as valid injunctions against war, must be unanimous, excluding the interested parties.

President Wilson discussed the Phillimore proposal with Colonel House. He considered it insufficient in many respects and finally turned it over to Colonel House with the request that he draw up a new draft of a "covenant"—the word was his own—on the basis of the ideas expressed in their discussion, and with the advice of the legal and other experts with whom House had been associated for more than a year in the Inquiry.

Colonel House was spending his summer on the seashore at Magnolia, Massachusetts, and it was here that he worked out his draft which he sent with a letter of explanation to the President on July 16, 1918. This draft of twenty-three articles forms the second step in the evolution of the Covenant.<sup>1</sup>

The House draft differed from the British proposals in several important respects. It not only went into greater detail on the subject of organization and provided for a permanent secretariat, but it made notable additions. During the spring Colonel House had had conferences with Elihu Root, and as a result added to the machinery of the League an International Court of Justice. In his covering letter to the President he wrote:

"In the past I have been opposed to a court, but in working the matter out it has seemed to me a necessary part of the machinery. In time the court might well prove the strongest part of it."

This court would not displace procedure by arbitration or conciliation, but offered a third method of settling disputes. The other two were retained from the Phillimore report, but with striking alterations. But most fundamental was the change in the means of punishing a state which violated the agreements. All recourse

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 9, for text of Colonel House's draft and letter of transmission and explanation to President Wilson



Edward M. House, Member of the American Commission  
to Negotiate Peace



to armed force was eliminated, leaving as the final and most stringent measure of coercion a complete blockade of the offending state.

Besides these elaborations and alterations of the Phillimore project, the House draft contained articles on many additional matters. An important article provided for reduction of all armaments to a standard of "safety," for the nationalization of manufacture of war material, and for full publicity in military affairs.

By far the most important of the new elements in the House draft was the article of direct guarantee of the "territorial integrity and political independence" of the members of the League. This provision, which developed into the famous Article X, had a most interesting history.

Two methods of guarantee were much discussed in connection with the League—and a third was mentioned.

1. A guaranteed process of arbitration such as that recommended in the Phillimore report. This was finally incorporated in Articles XII to XVI of the Covenant.

2. A simple guarantee of rights and possessions against invasion was supported by President Wilson, and became Article X of the Covenant.

The direct guarantee had been discarded by British writers on the League. All content themselves with the guarantees surrounding the arbitration agreements as sufficient to insure safety of the members. It is found in none of the significant plans of later years except Wilson's.

The President believed that the guarantee must be strong and direct. He could see no other way to stabilize a turbulent and too swiftly changing world. He could see no other way of reassuring terror-stricken France against a sudden invasion from the East. But

powers and with any governments or agencies which may be acting as mandates of the League of Nations in any part of the world.

ARTICLE III.  
Execution of the Covenants

~~The Contracting Powers, recognizing the principle that the establishment and maintenance of peace will require the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations; and the Executive Council is directed to formulate at once plans by which such a reduction may be brought about. The plan so formulated shall be binding when, and only when, unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this Covenant.~~

~~As the basis for such a reduction of armaments, all the Powers subscribing to the Treaty of Peace of which this Covenant constitutes a part hereby agree to abolish conscription and all other forms of compulsory military service, and also agree that their future forces of defense and of international action shall consist of militia or volunteers, whose numbers and methods of training shall be fixed, after expert inquiry, by the arrangements with regard to the reduction of armaments referred to in the last preceding paragraph.~~

ARTICLE IV.

The Contracting Powers recognize the principle that the establishment and maintenance of peace will require the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations; and the Executive Council is directed to formulate at once plans by which such a reduction may be brought about. The plan so formulated shall be binding when, and only when, unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this Covenant.

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The Executive Council shall also determine for the consideration and

Facsimile of original copy of the Covenant showing corrections in Article III (afterward Article X) in President Wilson's handwriting

strong as the guarantee of Article X was made, it was never strong enough to satisfy France.

Here again, in this method of direct guarantee, he drew his inspirations straight from the fundamental American documents, as the Articles of Confederation in which (Article III) the Colonies bind themselves "to assist each other against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them" and as in the Constitution (Article IV, Section 4) "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion . . .".

He had incorporated this idea of direct guarantee in his so-called Pan-American plan for assuring peace in the Western Hemisphere. On January 6, 1916, he told Congress that discussions were under way with the other American States for a general understanding based on an agreement to unite "in guaranteeing to each other absolute political independence and territorial integrity." The Pan-American project did not materialize, but the verbal form of guarantee he had adopted for it remained in his mind. In the Fourteenth Point of January 8, 1918, the association of nations is characterized as "for the purpose of affording" this direct guarantee.

Consequently when the Phillimore plan reached him he was not satisfied to accept its guaranteed agreements for arbitration and conciliation as a true accomplishment of his purpose. The direct guarantee had to go in, too, and House, knowing the President's wishes, put it into his draft.

But House recognized, as did also the President, that this guarantee of the "territorial integrity" of nations might make the world organization too inflexible and so the guarantee article in House's draft is followed by

a long, involved set of clauses providing for such future modifications of the status quo as may be demanded "pursuant to the principle of self-determination and as shall also be regarded by three fourths of the delegates as necessary and proper." This qualification of the guarantee, he explains in his letter, is advisable in order to avoid making "territorial guarantees inflexible"; and he cites as possible contingencies for which a door should be left open the desire of Canada or Lower California to unite with the United States.

So much for the House draft which the President had in his hands in July, 1918. He set to work at once upon it, checking in the margin the articles of which he approved. The one most conspicuously not so checked was that providing for an international court. Then he began recasting what he had selected into a new project.

He delighted in such work as this. He delights in words: in exact expression. Words are beautiful to him; and he is fond of new words which more clearly express the content of his ideas. "Covenant" he seized upon as a perfect expression of his conception of the new relationship among the nations. He later took eagerly Smuts's word "mandatory" to represent his idea of the trusteeship of the great nations of the League toward weak and backward peoples. One finds in the many documents that came swiftly under his hand at the Peace Conference many changes which have for their sole purpose clearer and more lucid English expression. I don't know how many times the President changed the phrase "in respect to," which irritated him intensely, to "in respect of." In almost the only two notable excursions, in the writings of his lifetime, outside of the field of politics, history, and economics—his essay called "Mere Literature" and an address on the Bible—he expresses this love of literary form.

In another way he expressed a strain of the enigmatic in his character. He has always been strongly interested in the number thirteen (the number of letters in his name), which indeed has curiously and strikingly applied to many of the facts of his life. When he redrew Colonel House's plan of twenty-three articles, he reduced the number to thirteen and adhered to this number, even in later drafts, adding other necessary provisions as "supplementary agreements."

That summer he worked in the big, quiet study in the White House, looking out across the little green park toward the gray shaft of the Washington Monument piercing the sky. He wrote with his own typewriter on small sheets of paper.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the omission of the international court, the most significant alteration made by the President was the restoration of armed force to a place among the means of punishing violations of the agreements. This was done by retaining the form of House's articles on arbitration and adding, after the agreement to use the blockade as a sanction, the words: "And to use any force that may be necessary to accomplish that object." Another significant change was in the standard for reduction of armaments—to "domestic safety." The guarantee article (which in his first draft was Article III) Wilson left as House had drafted it, with certain verbal changes—qualifying clauses and all. It must be remembered that down to the close of January, 1919, when the President spoke of a guarantee as the "key to the peace," it was this qualified, flexible guarantee he had in mind.

Having completed his work, the President went up for a few days' rest to Magnolia, where he discussed the Cove-

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 10, for text of President Wilson's first draft of the Covenant.

nant with Colonel House, explained his changes, but made no further modifications in his draft.

This first draft of the Covenant was what Wilson had with him when he left America. On arriving in Europe he was confronted with two new projects, both British, drawn up by General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil. Both were based in large degree upon the Phillimore report, but each had characteristic features of its own. The Smuts plan especially impressed the President as being well thought out, and convinced him that his own draft needed revision.

General Smuts was one of the two or three world leaders developed by the Peace Conference. An extraordinary man, scarcely fifty years old; one of the youngest leaders at the Conference, yet a Lieutenant General in the British Army and a Cabinet Minister of the Union of South Africa. Born on a farm in Cape Colony of Boer parentage, he had been one of the most brilliant Cambridge University scholars of his time, carrying off all the prizes. He developed early as a thoroughgoing idealist. He fought bitterly against the British in the Boer War—and when the Boers were beaten he retired—at thirty! “I prefer to sit still to water my orange trees, and to study Kant’s ‘Critical Philosophy.’” In a few years he was the foremost leader in the Union of South Africa. His knowledge of world conditions was extensive and realistic. Though his course at Paris was marked by certain curious contradictions, he was one of President Wilson’s strongest supporters. Personally, he was a rather taciturn and unapproachable man, with a high forehead, steely eyes, straight brows depressed in a habitual half frown, tightly closed lips, and a powerful chin; he was a man who looked the part of the leader. He was always at hand when there was difficult work to do—as in the mission to Hungary.

General Smuts really wanted, just as Wilson did, to make the League of Nations the foundation of a new international system, basing its authority to prevent war upon its peace-time prestige. Moreover, he sought to endow the League with duties and responsibilities that should make it the source of order in the reconstruction of the world out of chaos. "Europe is being liquidated," he declared, "and the League of Nations must be the heir to this great estate."

Smuts's recommendations were not presented schematically, but were interspersed in the text of a pamphlet with paragraphs of explanation. The President had them all copied out together and proceeded to work them into his own draft.<sup>1</sup> He wrote these all out on his own typewriter as before, using sheets of the same size; retaining the thirteen articles, but adding six supplementary articles. When he had finished he had eleven pages of new material to nine of original draft.<sup>2</sup>

From Smuts he took over a whole new scheme of organization, establishing a smaller Council in addition to the general conference of the League. This idea was by no means original with Smuts. The practice of putting international affairs into the hands of small, effective councils dominated by the principal allied and associated powers had developed extensively in the last year of the war. It already had a name, "diplomacy by conference." It seemed natural to many to continue this practice in time of peace and to give the League a more effective organ than the unwieldy general conference of all nations. In the League the problem of numbers of small states

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 11, for copy of Smuts's recommendations. Cecil's plan is not reproduced: it may be found in the Hearings of the Senate Committee on the Treaty of Peace, pp. 1103-64.

<sup>2</sup>See Volume III, Document 12, for President Wilson's second draft of the Covenant.

would present itself much more acutely than during the war, when the smaller active belligerents were relatively few. It had been safe to admit them to a certain participation in the work of the Councils without danger of being swamped. In the Supreme War Council they had been called in whenever their interests were involved in the discussion. In the League there would be a large number of small powers which could not conveniently be allowed to take part in all business. Instead of consulting only particular States when their interests were involved, Smuts favoured a plan of permanent representation of small states on the Council in a minority of one to the great Powers. All this constitutional machinery was lifted bodily from Smuts's plan by Wilson and substituted for the article previously taken over from House's draft. Again a permanent secretariat was included.

Smuts's recommendations on the subject of arbitration and the guarantees surrounding it were also taken over, partly in substitution for former clauses, partly in addition to them. Essentially, most of this material goes back to the original Phillimore report, whence Smuts had derived it. The expression is more decisive than Wilson's modification of House's diluted version. But the machinery of arbitration was retained from House.

The article on reduction of armaments was expanded by two paragraphs taken from Smuts—one on the abolition of conscription, the other on the establishment of scales of equipment and war material corresponding to actual forces.

The most considerable section of new material incorporated in Wilson's new draft from the Smuts project was a set of four supplementary agreements defining the mandatory system. But it must not be supposed that the system was an invention of Smuts. Not only did the

central idea have deep roots in American policy, so that it seemed a natural growth to the President; but Smuts had borrowed it from more radical thinkers than himself. The Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist programme of February, 1918, had looked forward to a supervision by the League of all colonial empires—those of the Allies as well as those wrested from the enemy, including the subject lands of Turkey. The concept of Smuts, limited to territories split off from the old empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, while it embraced sections of Europe not covered by the Labour programme, did not follow it at all into the colonial field, properly speaking. Wilson, in taking over the project, extended its scope to the former German colonies.

But there appeared in this revised version of the Covenant two more supplementary agreements besides the four on the mandatory system. These were from origins other than the Smuts plan. One was a recognition of the increasing consideration given labour in the determination of world affairs. It was an undertaking of all members of the League to strive for the establishment of "fair hours and humane conditions of labour" in their own and other countries. In somewhat altered form, this has become (a) of Article XXIII, of the existing Covenant.

The last supplementary agreement of this second Wilson draft was an article requiring all new States to grant equal rights to their "racial or national minorities." This article was undoubtedly derived from the propaganda of the Jews, who always put their cause on the same footing as that of the Lithuanians in Poland or Slovenes in Italy. Probably associated with this article was a new paragraph, afterward developed into the present Article XI, which Wilson has so often referred to as his "favourite article"—a set-off giving flexibility to Article X. It estab-

lished the friendly right of any nation to call the attention of all to "any circumstances anywhere which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations." This clause would enable a Lithuanian or Jugoslav state to bring before the League questions affecting the treatment of its racial kinsmen in Poland or Italy—and the United States to bring up questions of the treatment of the Jews anywhere.

Smuts, Labour, and the Jews thus account for all the alterations which appear in the President's second draft. There were other suggestions before him, but he made no use of them. One was the brief outline drawn up by Cecil. Like the Smuts plan, it provided for an upper council, but, unlike it, this body was to consist only of the representatives of great Powers, and it was to do all the real work of the League. Strong as were the President's feelings on the subject of the responsibility of the great Powers, this naked form of dictation, based frankly on the precedent of 1815, was too much for him.

Then there were the famous suggestions forwarded by Lansing with his letter of December 23.<sup>1</sup> It lies in the file almost as fresh and unhandled as when the Secretary appended his signature. The President knew Lansing's views without reading this document. Even more strongly than House, Lansing was opposed to the use of force as a sanction for the authority of the League over recalcitrant members. He would have nothing to do with forcible guarantees, either of the processes of arbitration or of the territorial and political status quo. He would go no further in collective action than a pledge of non-intercourse with offending States—a kind of "negative guarantee." His curiously distorted version of the general guarantee article, pledging all member States not to vio-

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<sup>1</sup>See "The Peace Negotiations," by Robert Lansing, pp. 48 ff.

late each other's integrity or independence, but allowing individual States to do so by authorization of the League, was surely a charter of very doubtful value for the peace of the world. It resulted in no changes in the President's draft.

Many other proposals of American origin, as well as the French plan, sent to him January 20, a Swiss discussion, Belgian suggestions, and so on, are among the President's documents, but none of them seem to have exerted any influence upon him in making his second draft.

This second draft of his project, having been completed, was handed to Colonel House and hurriedly and secretly printed. It was this draft, distributed by the President to the American Commissioners and to certain British leaders on January 10, that caused such a commotion among the diplomats. For they saw in it, for the first time, the concrete statement of what the President intended to do—for example, regarding limitation of armament and control of colonies. Here was a specific programme. It was this second draft that was given by Mr. Bullitt to the Senate Committee as the President's original Covenant—which it was not.

The circulation of the President's draft brought forth a number of comments and criticisms (which he had asked for). Only two of these—the ones submitted by General Bliss and David Hunter Miller—he considered of sufficient importance to necessitate changes in his draft.

The lengthy commentary by General Bliss contained many sound observations and suggestions, most of them matters of phrasing.<sup>1</sup> Two of these that were adopted go together. Among the objects to be secured by the League enumerated in Wilson's preamble stood "orderly govern-

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 13, for General Tasker H. Bliss's commentary on the Covenant.

ment." To this Bliss objected: "There are some people who may be frightened at the words . . . as a suggestion of the possible use of the League to put down internal disorders." This echo of the Holy Alliance was deleted from the revised draft. Upon Bliss's suggestion, too, the direct guarantee of integrity and independence was qualified by the phrase "as against external aggression." Miller's comments and suggestions, which were even more lengthy, have already been published.<sup>1</sup>

With these suggestions in hand the President at once prepared a third American draft of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup> It was printed like the second but apparently not circulated, as it is little known. In addition to the changes just described, as deriving from Bliss, it contained four more supplementary agreements. One of these was the troublesome religious equality clause. This may well have been the President's own contribution, based upon familiar American tradition. The Jews were always insistent upon not being regarded as a religious body. The racial minority clause met their main demands. But it may have suggested the other—particularly as a means of approaching such questions in other than new States.

The last three of the new articles appear to have been derived either from a set of suggestions handed to the President by Lansing on January 7, or from Miller's criticism. One was concerned with that old, thorny question, the freedom of the seas, which the British thought had been securely shelved by their reservation on the second of the Fourteen Points. Only, whereas Lansing had drawn his article to provide for the codification of international law on this subject, Wilson went on the supposition that this had already been accomplished, and

<sup>1</sup>See Senate Hearings, pp. 1177-1218.

<sup>2</sup>See Volume III, Document 14, for the President's third draft of the Covenant.

stipulated an agreement "that no power or combination of powers shall have a right to overstep in any particular the clear meaning of the definitions thus established." But the League, acting collectively, should have power to close the seas in whole or in part as a means of enforcing agreements. The other two articles provided for the publication of all future treaties and forbade commercial discrimination among members.

This account of the evolution of the President's plan for a league indicates how completely he was prepared, how thoroughly he had thought out the problems involved, before any commission was even formed. The analysis also discloses how little of the project was his own, how his function was almost purely that of selecting the ideas, and the very language, of other men. The context also shows that there were many at Paris as well prepared as he was. Further modifications were yet to be forced upon him by other processes than his own logic. One thing of his own (now, if not originally so) he was to carry through—the direct guarantee which became Article X.

At about the same time that Wilson's third draft was completed, appeared also the official project of the British delegation embodying in great detail the plan upon which it was prepared to take its stand in the discussion.<sup>1</sup> It was transmitted to the President (in mimeograph) by Colonel House, on January 19, with a note reminding him of a conference to be held with Lord Robert Cecil that evening. Next day Cecil himself sent in a printed copy. That Wilson's draft had been employed in preparing it is clear from the fact that it contains an article of direct guarantee, in much altered language, covering only "territorial integrity." Another article provides for possible revisions of the territorial settlement, but limits the action

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 15, for text of British plan.

of the League to recommending the change to the states concerned and removing its guarantee from the territory in question.

It was no doubt the President's ardent hope that his third draft of the Covenant, in which he had endeavoured to reconcile all views, would form the basis of discussion by the heads of states in the Council of Ten. But the British draft contained too many vital differences to be disposed of in a few revisions. There were, for example, the extremely controversial question as to whether British colonies should have representation separate from the British Empire, the problems of a permanent court of international justice and the rights of minorities. The President's talks with Cecil and Smuts convinced him that these were controversies that could be settled only by personal conferences and close study. Just at this time, also, the pressure of work in the Council of Ten, and other demands on the President's time, had become overwhelming.

It was therefore agreed between the Americans and the British that the two drafts be referred to their legal advisers, David Hunter Miller for the United States and C. J. B. Hurst for Great Britain. The outcome was a composite draft, fully satisfactory to neither side, but finally accepted, when the League of Nations Commission met on February 3, as the basis of discussion.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the origin of the Covenant which became the basis of the discussions in the League of Nations Commission.

In the meantime, another struggle, intimately connected with the American contention at Paris, was in full swing. There were two distinct elements in the President's pro-

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 16, for the Hurst-Miller plan, from minutes of the League of Nations Commission.

FIRST MEETING.  
HELD AT THE HOTEL CRILLON, FEBRUARY 3, 1919, AT 2.30 P.M.

President WILSON in the Chair.

Present:

President Wilson	-	-	United States of America.
Colonel House	-	-	
Lord Robert Cecil	-	-	British Empire.
Lieutenant General J. C. Smuts	-	-	
Mr. Léon Bourgeois	-	-	France.
Mr. Larnaudie	-	-	
Mr. Orlando	-	-	Italy.
Senator Scialoja	-	-	
Baron Makiuo	-	-	Japan.
Viscount Chinda	-	-	
Mr. Hymans	-	-	Belgium.
Mr. Epitácio Pessoa	-	-	Brazil.
Mr. V. K. Wellington Koo	-	-	China.
Mr. Jayme Batálha Reis	-	-	Portugal.
Mr. Vosnić	-	-	Serbia.

*The Chairman laid before the Commission a Draft Covenant, the text of which is contained in Annex 1, which it was agreed should form the basis of the Commission's deliberations. Mr. Léon Bourgeois laid before the Commission the French proposals relating to the creation of a League of Nations (Annex 2). Mr. Orlando laid before the Commission an Italian Draft Scheme (Annex 3).*

A general discussion followed dealing with the procedure to be adopted.

*(The meeting adjourned to meet at 8.30 P.M. on the 4th February at the same place.)*

Annex 1 to Minutes of First Meeting.

DRAFT COVENANT.

Preamble.

In order to secure international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to the use of armed force, by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another, and in order to promote international co-operation, the Powers signatory to this Covenant adopt this constitution of the League of Nations.

ARTICLE 1.

The action of the High Contracting Parties under the terms of this Covenant shall be effected through the instrumentality of meetings of Delegates representing the High Contracting Parties, of meetings at more frequent intervals of an Executive Council representing the States more immediately concerned in the matters under discussion, and of a permanent International Secretariat to be established at the capital of the League.

ARTICLE 2.

Meetings of the Body of Delegates shall be held from time to time as occasion may require for the purpose of dealing with matters within the sphere of action of the League.

Facsimile of first page of minutes of League of Nations Commission.  
(For a description of this meeting, see page 279.)

gramme: One, there must be a League of Nations; two, it must be an integral part of the Treaty of Peace. It will assist in the orderly understanding of what happened at Paris to consider the controversy, which was raging, at the time that the Covenant, as described above, was being developed, over this second element in the President's programme.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE KEY TO THE PEACE—STRUGGLE OF PRESIDENT WILSON TO MAKE THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AN “INTEGRAL PART OF THE GENERAL TREATY OF PEACE”

“A League of Nations seems to me to be a necessity of the whole settlement. I accept it as a key to the whole settlement.”—President Wilson’s reply to a delegation representing the International League of Nations, consisting of Lord Parmoor, Lord Buckmaster, the Bishop of Oxford, and Mr. G. P. Gooch, at London, December 28, 1918.

**W**E COME now to the true reasons why President Wilson insisted with unshakable determination upon making the League of Nations “an integral part of the general treaty of peace.”

This, in many respects, is the most important subject connected with the Peace Conference; for it was the concrete symbol of the whole struggle between the “new order” and the “old order.” Again and again Wilson called the League the “key to the whole settlement.”

The European Allies and Japan wanted the territorial, military, and economic settlements made first and, in general, according to the provisions of the old secret treaties: a peace based upon the necessities, interests, and fears of the great nations. The League was to come afterward—if at all!

President Wilson wanted the American principles and programme, which had been accepted at the Armistice, applied now and to all the terms of the settlement. He regarded the League of Nations as the cornerstone of that

programme without which the principles could not be upheld, nor the future peace of the world—America's supreme concern—soundly guaranteed. He was, therefore, for the League now, and knit into every part of the settlement. It was not Wilson's principles that caused the trouble at Paris, but his determination to apply them.

President Wilson once said of himself that he had a "single-track mind." He exemplified it in those early days of the Conference. No matter what happened he moved straight forward toward his objectives.

On the first day of the Conference the French offered their plan of procedure, which put the consideration of the League of Nations last. On the next day the President introduced his "list of subjects," which put the League first. He evidently expected that it would be discussed by the Council itself, and its principles, if not its details, worked out by the heads of States as the basis of the settlements.

The British, in their usual fashion, set to work at once to draft a resolution to bring the matter definitely before the Conference. Both the British and French were adepts in the preparation of such documents; they knew well the tactical value of putting down the actual written proposal.

The principal purpose of this British resolution was to get the discussion of the League out of the Council and into the hands of a special committee. The copy that we find in Mr. Wilson's file is printed on a single sheet of paper crowned by the British seal and dated January 15. It was handed to the President, no doubt, for immediate approval, but he held it back for a week.

During all this time discussions were going on outside the Council. The President's Covenant—described in the last chapter—at least certain concrete proposals in it, like those for cutting down armaments and the manda-

tory control of colonies—had fallen into the European camp with something of the effects of a bombshell. These things gave the allied leaders a clear glimpse, for the first time, of what the Americans intended to do—if they could. Wide differences of view at once developed, especially with the French and Italians.

Nevertheless, the President still hoped that the League would be discussed, so far as its general principles were concerned, in the main councils and by the heads of States. On January 21 he told Clemenceau, who so informed the Ten, that he intended to “submit the question of a League of Nations at the next meeting.” Here follows the discussion:

MR. LLOYD GEORGE stated that he agreed to this, and suggested that the question of the League of Nations be taken up at the next meeting, and that those present lay down the general principles and then appoint an international committee to work on the constitution of the League. . . .

President WILSON asked whether Mr. Lloyd George contemplated a committee formed of delegates.

MR. LLOYD GEORGE answered that he thought it would be desirable to have qualified persons on the committee.

President WILSON then explained for the information of those present how he had gone about drawing up a constitution. He stated that he had taken the Phillimore report and had asked Colonel House to rewrite it. He had then rewritten Colonel House’s constitution to suit his own ideas. Subsequently he had studied the plans prepared by General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil, and then he had rewritten the constitution once more. Finally, he had had a talk with Mr. Bourgeois, and he was glad to say that he had found his ideas in substantial accord with Mr. Bourgeois, General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil.

MR. BALFOUR suggested that the President’s draft be referred to the committee.

President WILSON thought it well that the committee be formed of those men who had already studied the question.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE agreed to this, and as he would like to have both General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil on the committee, he suggested that the committee be composed of two persons appointed by each of the delegations of the Great Powers.<sup>1</sup>

It was not only the diversity of opinion that was developing over the Covenant that caused the President to accept the Committee idea, but the Council itself was already overwhelmed with the problems of Russia and Poland and of a world still in chaos. For the world was not waiting either for the Council of Ten or for a league of nations commission! It was everywhere in dangerous flux. On January 19, for example, there was a political crisis in Italy and the general elections in Germany, both of which were sources of anxiety. Austria was starving; Hungary was already drifting toward revolution.

On the following day (January 22) the minutes record:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE read certain resolutions regarding the League of Nations, and they were accepted with certain amendments proposed by President Wilson.

These were the British resolutions which had been in the President's hands for a week, and the amendments referred to, which the President had made—one in typewriting and one in his own handwriting, were of immense significance. The printed text ran:

This League should be created as part of the peace.

Under this provision the settlements might be made according to the French plan of having two divisions of the Peace Conference, in the first of which all the settlements were to be made according to the old ideas, and then a second congress which would "discuss a Society of Nations."

<sup>1</sup> Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 21.

With the President's changes it read:

"This League should be created as an integral part of the general treaty of peace." In short, he wanted the League to be an "integral part"—indeed, the cornerstone—of the peace.

While this was his long-held purpose, there was also an immediate tactical significance in this amendment. If he could get immediate consideration of the principles of the League in the Council and by the heads of the States, as he had intended, he would so place the Council on record that the League could not be sidetracked. While this resolution was adopted, although with a reservation by Baron Makino, the very next day (January 23) Lloyd George precipitated the attempt (which will be described in the next chapter) to divide up the German colonies among the British dominions, the French, and the Japanese—which in itself was an attempt to sidetrack the League and get the settlements on the basis of the secret agreements rather than on the basis of the "new order." On January 25, during the second plenary session of the Conference, while the conflict over the colonies was raging in the Council of Ten, these resolutions of January 22 were passed by all the nations, an action which later proved of unexpected importance. The League project was thus fairly launched. Wilson, in a powerful speech on that day, drove home his main contention that the League was to be "the keystone of the whole programme" of the peace.

This is the central object of our meeting [he said]. Settlements may be temporary, but the actions of the nations in the interests of peace and justice must be permanent. We can set up permanent processes. We may not be able to set up permanent decisions.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes Second Plenary Session, January 25.

How far any of his hearers sympathized with this point of view may be doubted; but they accepted the resolution providing for a committee to draft the Covenant. There were still plenty of chances for them either to get the essential settlements made before the Covenant was ready and accepted—as they were at that moment trying to do with German colonies—or else to get a covenant to suit them.

There can be no doubt that the other heads of States—not one of whom really believed in the League (Smuts and Cecil believed in it, but not Lloyd George) considered that in referring it to a commission they were getting it, at least temporarily, out of the way—so they could proceed to the business that really interested them: the division of the colonies, the assessment of damages against the Germans, and so on. And they began by making the new commission as awkward and unwieldy as possible—as nearly a debating society—by adding members to it from as many small nations as possible. Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Sonnino, who had been so intent upon excluding the small nations from the effective deliberations of the great Powers on the terms of the Treaty, now insisted that those small nations be allowed a share in the formulation of the League.

So, for reasons of expediency, it was agreed to allow delegates from five small powers on the commission—a number which was increased to nine after the sessions began. As the great Powers each had two delegates, there was thus finally formed a commission of nineteen, with the small powers in a minority of one, as planned for the council of the League.

This colloquy in the secret session of January 22 of the Council of Ten is at once so subtle, so significant, so touched, indeed, to the understanding mind, with irony, that it is here reproduced:

President WILSON observed that as a practical matter he would suggest that an initial draft for the League of Nations be made by a commission appointed by the Great Powers. This draft could then be submitted to a larger commission on which all the small powers would be represented. In a word, the drafting would be done by the Great Powers, and the result submitted to the criticism of the small powers.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE thought that inasmuch as the League of Nations is to be, in fact, a sort of shield of the small powers, they should be represented on the drafting committee. Perhaps it might be better to have the Great Powers nominate their own representatives, and also name the small powers, who should likewise have representatives on the commission.

President WILSON stated he would prefer to see a more elastic arrangement, and thought it most desirable that the opinion of the thoughtful men representing the small powers should be sought. Would it not be well to have the commission of ten to be appointed by the Great Powers authorized to call in any one they choose and discuss with representatives of the small powers those features of the scheme most likely to affect the latter? Moreover, they need not confine themselves to a few. It seemed to him that it was most advisable to proceed in this way. Much more would be gotten out of the small powers, if they were called in as friends and advisers. Furthermore, in that way the Great Powers would avoid the difficulty of seeming to pick out men whom the small powers should themselves choose.

M. CLEMENCEAU observed that the work was as much for the Great Powers as it was for the small powers. He thought it most desirable that the great and small powers should get together, and that their work should be intimately connected. It was important to let the public feel that their work was connected. He suggested that the Great Powers name two representatives apiece and the small powers name five. He thought they would be only too glad to follow the advice of the representatives of the Great Powers. He proposed that the Bureau ask the small powers to get together and name five. The responsibility would then be theirs. He spoke, of course, of belligerents only, and not of neutrals. He was most anxious the work should begin as soon as possible, and he hoped the commission would be appointed at once. . . .

President WILSON observed that it was impossible to draft an

instrument on a large committee. It would be far more practical to appoint a manageable drafting committee, letting this small committee of a few men prepare and submit a draft to the others, and obtain their impressions and opinions.

Mr. BALFOUR understood it was intended that the committee should, from time to time, consult the members of the Great Powers.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE thought it well to remember that the small powers were becoming very restive, and felt they had been locked out, so to speak. Why not let President Wilson prepare a draft for immediate consideration by the commission? He did not think it would be impossible to have a commission of fifteen representatives. As to the fear that the assignment of only five to represent all the small powers might cause some embarrassment to their delegates, he saw no reason why the matter should not be put up to them, letting them discuss and fight over the question of who should represent them.

M. CLEMENCEAU repeated that he thought it most necessary that the Great Powers should make the Conference feel that they wanted the smaller powers, and ask all to come in with them.

Lloyd George and Clemenceau had thus got the League idea temporarily sidetracked in a committee and then they had overloaded the committee, making it a kind of blowing-off place for the small powers; so that they could be left free, in their small council of the great Powers, to settle and divide up the world as they pleased. But the President, although severely hampered, accepted the challenge: and then did something that the others had never in the least calculated upon. They had expected Colonel House to be the chief American representative on the League of Nations Commission—knowing his deep interest in the subject—but the President himself became a member and chairman of the League of Nations Commission, thus giving it unexpected power and prominence. He and Orlando were the only heads of great States upon it. Lloyd George, having already appointed Smuts and Cecil, could not easily come in, even if he had cared to do so. Interest even shifted from the Council itself to the

League of Nations Commission. It was keen strategy on both sides!

What the European and Japanese leaders never seemed to understand was the deadly earnestness and determination of this American President. They did not realize at the time the clearness with which he had made up his mind as to his course or to what depths his convictions went, that he represented not only the ideals and traditions of America, but the hope of the world. During the tragedy and suffering of the war every one had thought, talked, and written about some great vague association of nations that must emerge in the final settlements to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster. It filled men's minds. All statesmen, French and British as well as American, included it in their declarations of policy. Only the Japanese never let go emotionally! None had given clearer and more forcible expression to this great hope than Wilson; but whereas many of these spoke of it under the fleeting impulse of a current of sentiment or of political expediency, leaving harder and more sordid motives undisturbed underneath, the American President meant every word he said and came to Paris determined to do what he had agreed to, what had been promised.

It is most impressive—and necessary at this point—to examine the genesis of Wilson's determination to make the League "an integral part of the general treaty of peace," and, indeed, the most important part. It was no sudden or capricious decision, no mere tactical feint as some of the diplomats seemed to think. He had been wrestling with the problems it presented for three years, throughout the ordeal of the war. It had been gradually evolved, and in his mind was the inevitable and logical result to be achieved from American intervention in the war. What other interest or purpose had America than to secure

from these settlements the future permanent peace of the world? The diplomats of Europe had no conception of the depth of the President's conviction upon this point.

His thinking on the subject had gone through four distinct stages, each corresponding to the changing attitude of America toward this world conflagration.

Early in the war he began to see that America, whatever the outcome, would be profoundly affected; that our isolation as a nation was henceforward impossible.

We are participants, whether we would or not, in the life of the world. . . . We are partners with the rest. What affects mankind is inevitably our affair as well as the affair of the nations of Europe and of Asia.

He said this in an address to the League to Enforce Peace, May 27, 1916, nearly a year before America entered the war. If this great new fact was true, then what should America do? What should she demand in place of the security of her former, but now inevitably disappearing, isolation? She could arm herself; become a great military power; this was what the nations of Europe were doing. He rejected this idea utterly. The only alternative was some form of international coöperation, in which America could lead. She should therefore join with the other nations of the world "to see that right prevails as against any sort of selfish aggression," and thus preserve peace in the world. In short, there should be an association of nations. This logic seemed to him unescapable. But at that time we were neutrals; the present war must be settled "as the belligerents may agree." We could have nothing to do, of course, with the terms of the peace. We might come into the association of nations afterward.

Our interest is only in peace and its future guarantees.

In other words, the belligerents were to settle the terms of the peace by negotiation (with Germany, of course, at the peace table), and we were to come in afterward as a member of the association of nations to hold the world steady.

But the fiercer grew the war, and the nearer America came to being swept into it, the more earnestly the President began to ask himself concerning the relationship of this association of nations with the terms of the peace. He still envisaged a peace by negotiation, a "peace without victory," as he told the Senate on January 22, 1917: and he still believed that the future peace of the world could not be guaranteed without the participation of the United States. But he had seen the passions of Europe rising to greater and greater heights; he had begun to perceive how difficult it would be, in such an atmosphere of hatred and fear and greed, to get a "just peace." He therefore began to be concerned about the terms of the peace. He tells the Senate that before we guarantee the peace it must be "worth guaranteeing" in itself. We are to condition our entrance to the future association upon the justice of the terms.

But when we took the great plunge into the war itself, in April, everything was changed. We were no longer neutral; we were fighting side by side with the Allies; we would have to sit in at the peace table. It would be a peace with victory, imposed, not negotiated. America would be in it: Germany out of it. We now became deeply involved in responsibility for the terms: we could no longer stand aside negatively and say, "It is up to you to make a just settlement, or we will not guarantee it."

Consequently, the President devoted a great deal of hard thought and effort to the formulation of terms such as the United States could undertake to support positively

and guarantee. The association of nations always appeared along with these terms. It was the last of the Fourteen Points in January, 1918.

But it is not until September, 1918 (Metropolitan Opera House Speech), that he comes finally to the decision that the constitution of the League of Nations is to be the "most essential part of the peace settlement itself," because "without such an instrumentality, by which the peace of the world can be guaranteed, peace will rest in part upon the word of outlaws." But much emphasis is still laid upon the terms of peace. The price all must pay is "impartial justice in every item of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed."

Again in his "Armistice speech" to Congress, November 11, he reinforces the same idea.

Then the President came to Europe and began to face the stark realities there. He felt in the very atmosphere the opposition that was growing up, the "slump in idealism." An avalanche of problems, expressed in petitions, appeals, demands—all for the realization of some immediate or material interest—descended upon him. He began to feel that "disinterested justice" would not be easy to obtain, despite the solemn engagements taken. He began to see how enormously difficult it would be to assure the full justice of all the terms.

He confesses in his speech at Manchester, England:

I am not hopeful that the individual terms of the settlement will be altogether satisfactory.<sup>1</sup>

But all this, instead of weakening his purpose, seems only to have hardened it. For he is still convinced that the great interest and need and hope of America is future peace. In order to secure this in an anarchic world, from

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<sup>1</sup>December 30, 1918.

which injustice cannot be immediately abolished, there was a greater need of the League than ever. It was even more important than the terms. He told his hearers in the Guildhall speech at London, December 28, that "the key to the peace was the guarantee of the peace, not the items of it." Two days later, at Manchester, he advanced the further idea, the logical next step—for if the individual terms are not satisfactory there must be machinery for changing them—that the League would also "provide the machinery of readjustment, . . . the machinery of good-will and friendship," for the redemption of the settlement from any defects which the heat and passion of the time might inject into it. It must, therefore, more than ever, be a vital part of the Treaty itself.

It is most important to bear in mind that Wilson's original concept of the guarantee article in his draft constitution for the League included provision for modifying the status quo as the treaty of peace should leave it, by self-determination and by vote of three fourths of the member States. And he considered always that Article XI of the final Covenant—which he called his "favourite article"—also served this purpose of making the guarantee flexible. He never conceived of the guarantee as saddling an unjust settlement forever upon the world.

The President's mind was therefore fixed regarding the relationship of the League to the treaties of peace long before the Conference opened. It must be a part of the immediate settlement; it was indispensable to guarantee the peace of the world, because it was the only instrument that, by adjusting such future causes of war, especially those that might arise out of the treaties, could be used to prevent nations from flying again at one another's throats. In short, it was the only thing that would give America

what, primarily, she had fought for, peace and security (without great armaments) after the war.

As the Peace Conference developed, still another reason, not originally in the President's mind, for insisting that League and Treaty go together became an element in further hardening his determination. This was the doubt that now began to grow, whether if the League were not made an inseparable part of the peace, accepted then and there, the assent of all the Powers (perhaps even America!) could be obtained—at least for a long time. He had not originally foreseen any reluctance to enter the League—had not the nations all been for it?—and when such reluctance appeared it only emphasized his conviction that League and Treaty must be accepted as one act.

This was the situation up to January 25, when the famous resolution regarding the League of Nations was adopted. It was a fight skillfully carried on by the President, and he had, to an extraordinary degree (in all these early battles), won his points. He was getting the machinery for the creation of the League well started; he had achieved his great purpose of securing the acceptance, by all nations, at the open conference of January 25, of his central principle that the League must be an "integral part of the general treaty of peace." And if by force of circumstances he had been prevented from having the broad principles of the League discussed and the elements of the programme adopted in the Supreme Council, as he had hoped, he was soon to make the League of Nations Commission, to which the task of organization was being entrusted, almost as important, at least in the public eye, as the Council itself by becoming himself the chairman of it. Indeed, those long meetings in the Crillon to discuss the new League for a time almost blanketed the work of the Council of Ten.

But these, as I have said, were only early skirmishes. The great battles were to come later. While the Allies had accepted the idea of the League Covenant as a part of the Treaty, it was on the assumption, of course, that it would be the kind of a covenant that would please and satisfy them. Consequently, they—the French especially—carried their fight into the League of Nations Commission—as will be shown later. But they also had another method, which they now hastened to attempt. They had got the discussion of the League safely pocketed, as they thought, in a committee; why not unite and push forward instantly with the division among themselves of the spoils of war—the German colonies—before the President's committee could report? This remarkable coup of the old diplomacy, engineered with consummate skill by Mr. Lloyd George, will be described in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XV

### WAR SPOILS AT PARIS.—STRUGGLE TO SECURE DIVISION OF THE FORMER GERMAN COLONIES IN ADVANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LEAGUE—PRESIDENT'S FIGHT FOR HIS PRINCIPLES

THE last two chapters have shown with what vigour and success the President had driven forward the development of the two primary elements of the American programme at Paris. He had brought his plan for a league of nations strongly into the foreground of the discussions, and was himself the chairman of the commission which was preparing a constitution for it. He had also secured the reluctant acceptance of the equally important aspect of this programme; that this League was to be organized as a part of the peace itself. Apparently the new order was winning all along the line.

But the wilier diplomats of the old order had not been sleeping on their arms.

They did not like this League; and, above all, they did not want it in the Treaty. Moreover, they had been genuinely alarmed at certain of the proposals in Wilson's Covenant. Could he mean to stand, for example, for the mandatory control of all the former German colonies, and all Turkey, as he proposed? It was particularly disturbing to the British Dominions and to Japan, who wished to divide immediately the German colonies in the Pacific and in Africa as spoils of war.

This alarm increased as the President pressed forward

with his League plan—and was evidently determined to make it a real and vital part of the peace. What should they do?

Their plan was simple—to demand at once a division of the spoils, before the discussion of the League, or of the mandatory system, could even be begun. They had got the consideration of the Covenant (as was shown in the last chapter) put away safely, as they thought, in a commission, through the resolution of January 22.

On the very next day, January 23, the impetuous Lloyd George precipitated the discussion of the disposition of the German colonies. He did this in spite of the fact that the council had already accepted (January 13) the President's "list of subjects for discussion," in which the League of Nations was first, followed by reparations and territorial questions, with "colonies" last of all.

It was an exceedingly bold and clever tactical move, calculated in the first place to get the Allies what they wanted, and in the second, to test out the capacities and fighting qualities of this American leader.

For President Wilson was the great unknown factor at Paris. While everyone knew what he had said, no one knew yet what he would do.

Was he merely an inspirational preacher who had caught the enthusiasm of the world, or did he mean business? How much of a fighter was he?

Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Sonnino had long been working together, and knew one another well. They had met in conference and decided military problems of the first magnitude; they had faced political crises together, and they had negotiated—as we now know more definitely than we did at the time—regarding many of the coming settlements of the peace, both those founded upon the earlier secret treaties and those which had arisen since

American interposition in the war had assured ultimate victory to the allied arms.

But not one of the principal leaders except Mr. Balfour had previously met face to face this American President who had exercised so powerful a moral leadership in the world. They had willingly accepted him as the grand strategist of the diplomacy of the last year of the war, for he represented the strength of America, and his principles, widely accepted by the restive liberals and radicals of all Europe, had provided as powerful a unifying influence in the allied countries as it was corrosive in the Central Empires. But the time had come now for employing the tactics of diplomacy as contrasted with its strategy. And the struggle was now among themselves: not with a foreign enemy. What would Wilson do? Was this America, full of strange ideas and new principles, to sit in with the family of Europe as an honoured guest, politely accepting its ancient customs? Or was America to be like the rich and powerful pioneer son, returned from far lands, who had just saved the old home from foreclosure and now proposed to banish the antique furniture and change the plumbing?

When, therefore, Lloyd George proposed on January 23 that the colonial matters be discussed, M. Clemenceau of France and Signor Sonnino of Italy instantly agreed—as though it had all been understood beforehand.

It was perfectly plain to the President what this swift and astonishingly clever shift in tactics meant. In no other way could they more shrewdly drive forward their own ideas of the peace settlement as opposed to those of the President. In no other case than this relatively simple one of the distribution of the spoils of war, already in their hands, could the allied nations present such a united front. Here were hundreds of islands dotted

throughout the Pacific Ocean, a great slice of China and vast areas in Africa inhabited by 13,000,000 people—the former German colonies—to be “divided up.” Lloyd George was also thinking of the treasure house of the old empires of the Near East and spoke of the “Turkish Empire,” a large part of which would be “parcelled out.” These were the most tangible spoils of war, and most easily disposed of. A distribution now would leave all the parties feeling that they had “got something definite” and in diplomatic good-humour to attack harder problems. Indeed, the reason given by Lloyd George for suggesting this action was that “Oriental questions and colonial questions were less involved [than European questions], and to economize time he suggested that these matters be tackled at once.”<sup>1</sup>

The President immediately objected—all the quotations here used are made directly from the Secret Minutes—arguing that:

the world’s unrest arose from the unsettled condition of Europe, not from the state of affairs in the East, or in the Colonies, and that the postponement of these questions would only increase the pressure on the Delegates of the Peace Conference. He would therefore prefer to set in process immediately all that was required to hasten a solution of European questions.

As a result of this discussion the President apparently won his point, for it

was then decided that the Secretary General should ask all Delegations representing Powers with territorial claims to send to the Secretariat their written statements within 10 days.

The President, however, was profoundly disturbed. It was clear enough now that he was to have shrewd opponents—the shrewdest in the world. They were not going to fight him on his main contentions. That

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 29.

would have been poor tactics. It was the familiar policy which he himself described later in the Council of "acceptance in principle, but negation in detail."

In short, after a settlement had been completely made on the order of the old diplomacy and according to the provisions of the secret treaties, and each nation had got all it could get materially, strategically, and politically, there was to be a pious statement of "principles leading to justice, morals, and liberty" and a discussion of the organization of a society of nations!

But the President determined to settle *this* war according to the new principles which had been accepted at the Armistice. They were to be applied now. The League of Nations was not to be relegated to some vague future congress but brought at once into being. It is not at all troublesome to suffer idealists in the world, provided they are not determined upon applying their ideals immediately!

But the first principle of successful diplomacy, as of war, is attack—swift and unexpected attack. While President Wilson thought he had succeeded in getting the discussion of colonial claims postponed, he had not counted upon the mercurial Lloyd George. At the afternoon session of January 24 there was a great stir in the outer room of the French Foreign Office, where behind double-locked doors the Council of Ten was sitting.

"At this stage," reports the Secret Minutes, "the Dominion Prime Ministers entered the room": a dry way, indeed, of setting forth the dramatic arrival of the British Empire! Lloyd George was incomparable in staging such effects as this.

Perhaps the figures among them that stood out most impressively at first glance were Massey of New Zealand, a great shaggy, rough-hewn bulk of a man; and Smuts of

South Africa, the youngest and most distinguished of the group in the uniform of a Lieutenant General of the British Army. Hughes of Australia, a small, deaf, rather dried-up old man with an electric ear phone, and Borden of Canada, the "handsomest man at the Peace Conference," completed the group. They were ushered into the Council room and welcomed by Clemenceau. They had come to present their claims for the possession of most of the former German colonies which, as Lloyd George explained, had been captured by Dominion troops. Mr. Lloyd George made a brief statement showing that the German colonial policy had been a bad one—"in Southwest Africa they had deliberately pursued a policy of extermination."

All he would like to say on behalf of the British Empire as a whole was that he would be very much opposed to the return to Germany of any of these Colonies. . . .

President WILSON said that he thought all were agreed to oppose the restoration of the German Colonies.

M. ORLANDO, on behalf of Italy, and Baron MAKINO, on behalf of Japan, agreed.

(There was no dissentient and this principle was adopted. . . .)

In this brief and summary way all the German colonies were alienated from German control. The Allies already had military and political sanctions for this alienation; and they felt that the maladministration of these Colonies by Germany gave them moral sanctions. Even Herr Erzberger in the days before the war—for the scandals of German colonization had been aired at home as well as abroad—remarked that "it would be a curse if the German colonies could only be made profitable if they were manured by the blood of the natives."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Many German leaders made similar sharp criticisms of German colonial policy. Herr Dernburg, then Secretary of State, who visited the colonies in 1907, said in the

The next question was to decide what to do with these vast derelict populations of more or less helpless native people. If there was a moral sanction for taking them away from Germany it imposed an equal moral duty upon the Allies to devise a system which should not result in the same abuses under any future control.

Mr. Lloyd George was at his best in presenting and dramatizing such a situation as this. Vigorously on his feet, with his leonine head thrown back, and his arguments pouring from him in a colourful torrent, he was an engaging and persuasive figure. He now presented three possible methods of future control of the colonies. The first was internationalization or direct administration by the League of Nations—and this he rejected without argument—and it was never indeed seriously considered by the Conference. Former experience of such international control as in the Congo, Samoa and the New Hebrides, in Egypt and Morocco, had been unfortunate. The second was "that one nation should undertake the trusteeship on behalf of the League as mandatory"—the idea already widely discussed as a part of the League of Nations scheme. The third was frank, old-fashioned annexation—and this was what the British Dominions wanted and wanted at once—and in this policy of annexation Mr. Lloyd George supported them. If he could establish this policy in connection with the colonies, where his anxiety was not so much for Great Britain herself as on behalf of her dominions, it would make easier sailing when the problem of "parcelling out the Turkish Empire," which he saw just ahead, came up.

Reichstag, February 18, 1908: "The planters are at war with everybody. . . . Their only principle is to make as much money as possible. . . . The State is asked always to carry a whip in its hand."

Herr Bebel, social democratic leader, said in the Reichstag, March 20, 1918: "What we have heard up to date from our colonies often equals the acts of oriental despots. There, too, are acts of cruelty, acts of brutality of which one cannot conceive."

"He would like," he said, "the Conference to treat the territories as part of the Dominions which had captured them."

He was as vigorous and vivid in his arguments now for this solution, which President Wilson a little later called a "mere distribution of the spoils," as he had been vigorous and vivid in January, 1918, when the shibboleth "self-determination" was sweeping the world and he had pressed its application further than President Wilson had ever thought of doing—to the native tribes of Africa. On January 5, 1918, he had said to the Trade Union Congress which was vigorously supporting the principle of "no annexations":

With regard to the German colonies, I have repeatedly declared that they are held at the disposal of a conference whose decisions must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants of such colonies.

At that time he had vividly imagined these colonies as somehow controlling their own destinies, but in the present argument, where he had a wholly different purpose to serve, he saw some of them with equal vividness as "cannibal colonies, where people were eating each other."

The Dominion Prime Ministers then presented their cases, one after another: First, Mr. Hughes of Australia who wanted New Guinea and other islands; then Mr. Massey of New Zealand, who wanted Samoa; and then General Smuts of South Africa, who wanted German Southwest Africa. They were all frankly for outright annexation and their arguments were based practically upon the same premises:

1. The cost and losses of the Dominions in the war, and the fact that Dominion or British troops were now in possession.

2. The strategic security and military necessity of the Dominions. "Any strong power controlling New Guinea," said Mr. Hughes, "controlled Australia." "Samoa," argued Mr. Massey of New Zealand, "was of great strategic importance, and the key to the Pacific," and therefore it should be controlled absolutely by New Zealand.

3. Each Dominion argued that the interests of the natives would be secure under a policy of direct annexation. The Dominions were democracies: "They were doing their best for civilization in that part of the world." Mr. Massey mentioned the fact that "there were six native Members in the New Zealand Parliament to-day."

General Smuts made a slightly different case, for he showed that German Southwest Africa was practically "a desert country without any product of great value," and because of its small population a mandatory system would not work practically as well as direct annexation.

Finally Sir Robert Borden of Canada said that "the Dominion he represented had no territorial claims to advance," but he was for giving the other Dominions what they wanted. Throughout the Conference, although Canada had had great losses and made great sacrifices in the war—far greater in proportion than those of the United States—she made no selfish claim whatever for herself. Canada, of course, was unlike the other Dominions in having no fear for her security. Australia and New Zealand, watching the rise of the new Empire of Japan and the coming struggle for the control of the Pacific, were in a widely different situation. Moreover, Canada, like the United States, had vast, undeveloped resources and needed no more territory.

If the British Dominions were frank in their demands for the prompt division of the "spoils of war"—before

settling anything else—the Japanese and the French were not less so. On January 27 in the Council of Ten the Japanese, whom someone called the “silent partners of peace,” appeared in the person of Baron Makino and said that “The Japanese Government feels justified in claiming from the German Government the unconditional cession of:

- (a) The leased territory of Kiaochow together with the railways and other rights possessed by Germany in respect of Shantung province.
- (b) All of the Islands in German possession in the Pacific Ocean North of the Equator.

The following day M. Simon, French Minister for the Colonies, presented an equally frank demand by France for the annexation of Togoland and the Cameroons in Africa, basing his claim in part upon the existence of certain secret agreements between Great Britain and France. He argued in favour of “annexation pure and simple, which he had come to support that day.” It also developed presently that the Belgians expected a piece of German East Africa, and that Italy had certain other provisional claims based upon the secret treaty of London. A little later, when she discovered what was going on, Portugal also lifted up a piping treble, but no one paid any attention.

Nothing could be clearer than the issue here joined. To President Wilson it negatived his whole principle of the peace: the principle that had been accepted by all the nations at the Armistice.

“No annexations” and “self-determination” had been the watchwords of the peace programme; not “mere phrases” but “pledges of the most binding order.” “People and provinces,” he had said, “were not to be

bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game." "The day of conquest and aggrandizement has gone by," he had said in his "Fourteen Points" speech. And the fifth point of the Fourteen had been:

A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be considered.

But here, so it seemed to the President, the claims were based primarily upon the security and interest of the great governments, not upon the "principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as is the interest of the strongest." In short, to him, it was frankly an application of the old method of grab—"a mere distribution of the spoils." He did not mince words in expressing his opinion there in the Council—sitting a little forward in his chair, speaking in a steady, rather low voice, with his eyes fixed for a moment on Lloyd George, then on Clemenceau:

The world would say that the Great Powers first portioned out the helpless parts of the world, and then formed a League of Nations. The crude fact would be that each of these parts of the world had been assigned to one of the Great Powers. He wished to point out, in all frankness, that the world would not accept such action: it would make the League of Nations impossible and they would have to return to the system of competitive armaments, with accumulating debts and the burden of great armies.<sup>1</sup>

It was a new principle that he sought to establish, a "new order"; a new attitude of the strong nations toward weak and helpless peoples. He was not doing this merely

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 28.

because it was right or ideal but because it was the most practical way to remove the dangers and cost of militarism and the causes of war.

But any leader who rejects an old method of settlement must be able to assert and explain a new method. Thus President Wilson was forced—as the others knew he would be—to defend a system which he and his commission on the League of Nations had not yet had the time to work out! They had attacked his line at its weakest point. But he rose strongly to the defense.

On January 27, in the Council of Ten, he made a "clear statement of what was in the mind of those who proposed a trusteeship by the League of Nations through the appointment of mandatories." It was a very distinguished group of men who listened to him there on that day in the old French building on the Quai d'Orsay. He had before him the chief figures of the three great European nations—the British Empire, France, and Italy—each accompanied by his foreign minister. There were also present all the British Dominion Prime Ministers and the representatives of Japan (Makino, Matsui, and Saburi) and China (Wang, Koo, and Chao). In all, with the experts, secretaries, and interpreters, there were thirty-two persons in the room—and probably twenty-five of them (perhaps all except the Chinese) were actively hostile to the President's new principles. Here is what the President said:

The basis of this idea was the feeling which had sprung up all over the world against further annexation. Yet, if the Colonies were not to be returned to Germany (as all were agreed), some other basis must be found to develop them and to take care of the inhabitants of these backward territories. It was with this object that the idea of administration through mandatories acting on behalf of the League of Nations arose. . . . Some institution must be found to

carry out the ideas all had in mind, namely, the development of the country for the benefit of those already in it and for the advantage of those who would live there later. . . .

The purpose was to serve the people in undeveloped parts, to safeguard them against abuses such as had occurred under German administration and such as might be found under other administrations. Further, where people and territories were undeveloped, to assure their development so that, when the time came, their interests, as they saw them, might qualify them to express a wish as to their ultimate relations—perhaps lead them to desire their union with the mandatory power. . . .

In the first place, the League of Nations would lay down certain general principles in the mandate, namely, that districts be administered primarily with a view to the betterment of the conditions of the inhabitants. Secondly, that there should be no discrimination against members of the League of the Nations so as to restrict economic access to the resources of the districts. . . . All countries would pay the same duties, all would have the same right of access. . . .

If the process of annexation went on, the League of Nations would be discredited from the beginning. Many false rumours had been set about regarding the Peace Conference. Those who were hostile to it said that its purpose was merely to divide up the spoils. If they justified that statement in any degree, that would discredit the Conference.

This, in brief, was the President's idea of the new principle he sought to have applied. It was opposed, root and branch, to the old imperialistic practices.

I have spoken of this as the "President's idea," but it was not his: it was America's. It had its roots in the traditional principles and policies of the United States, although, as I shall show, President Wilson pressed it a step further forward, using General Smuts's plan for a mandatory system as the practical basis of his programme.

America inevitably had a more liberal background for its colonial policy than did any of the nations of the Old World. The necessities of commerce and the investment of capital never imposed on us an obligation

for colonial expansion as it did on Great Britain. The necessity of finding an outlet for surplus population never counted with us as it has with Japan or Italy or Germany. A vigorous minority even opposed such conditional expansion as this country embarked upon at the close of the Spanish War, and the issue of "Imperialism" was raised vigorously, if not successfully.

The ideals of trusteeship, as applying to colonial possessions, had been set forth by many former American leaders, regardless of political partisanship: Elihu Root, then Secretary of War, in his instructions to the Taft Commission of 1900 to the Philippines warns the commission to "bear in mind that the government which they are establishing is designed not for our satisfaction or for the expression of our theoretical views, but for the happiness, peace, and prosperity of the people of the Philippine Islands."

President McKinley wrote in his message to Congress (December 3, 1900):

The fortunes of war have thrown upon this nation an unsought trust which should be unselfishly discharged and devolves upon this Government a moral as well as a material responsibility toward those millions we have freed from an oppressive yoke. . . . Our obligation as guardian was not lightly assumed.

President Roosevelt declared in his annual message to Congress of December 6, 1904, that

our chief reason for continuing to hold them [the Philippines] must be that we ought in good faith to try to do our share of the world's work.

President Taft went a step further and asserted in his annual message to Congress in December, 1912, that

we are seeking to arouse a national spirit, and not, as under the older colonial theory, to suppress such a spirit. The character of the work

which we have been doing is keenly recognized in the Orient, and our success thus far, followed with not a little envy by those who, initiating the same policy, find themselves hampered by conditions grown up in earlier days and under different theories of administration. . . .

President Wilson accepted and followed this American policy with enthusiasm. On April 20, 1915, we find him saying:

We do not want a foot of anybody's territory. If we have been obliged by circumstances, or have considered ourselves to be obliged by circumstances in the past, to take territory which we otherwise would not have thought of taking, I believe I am right in saying that we have considered it our duty to administer that territory not for ourselves but for the people living in it, and to put this burden upon our consciences—not to think that this thing is ours for our use, but to regard ourselves as trustees of the great business for those to whom it does really belong.

Various words had been used to express the new principle of colonial relationship. McKinley had thought of America as a "guardian" and Wilson as a "trustee."

But there was another vital and more advanced element in the American idea. We were not only to be trustees of weaker people, an idea also familiar in the best British thought on colonial obligations (the "white man's burden") but we were, in President Taft's words, "to arouse a national spirit, and not as under older colonial theory, to suppress such a spirit."

This idea President Wilson developed again and again in his speeches, as at Topeka, in the course of his Western preparedness tour:

The greatest surprise the world ever had, politically speaking, was when the United States withdrew from Cuba. We said, "We are fighting this war for the sake of the Cubans, and when it is over we are going to turn Cuba over to her own people," and statesmen in every capital in Europe smiled behind their hands. . . . The Ameri-

can people felt the same way about the Philippines, though the rest of the world does not yet believe it. We are trustees for the Filipino people, and just as soon as we feel that they can take care of their own affairs without our direct interference and protection, the flag of the United States will again be honoured by the fulfillment of a promise.

Such was the essence of the American idea at the end of the war. It was an idea of national service to the world.

Up to the time of his arrival in Europe, however, the President does not appear to have considered the incorporation of such a principle in the League of Nations. It occurs in none of the earlier drafts of the Covenant. On reaching Paris, however, he read the pamphlet ("The League of Nations, a Practical Suggestion") written by General Jan Smuts of South Africa and published in December, 1918. He had also considered Smuts's detailed proposals for a league of nations. Those contained proposals for setting up a "mandatory system" to deal with territories belonging to the old Empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. President Wilson, as already shown, was greatly impressed by the statesmanlike suggestion of General Smuts—and the idea of the mandatory system as a part of the responsibility of the League at once joined up with the American principles already in his thoughts and became his own. And once he got into the Conference itself and saw the fierce rivalry for nationalistic and militaristic expansion—with the spirit of trusteeship utterly beclouded—he became more than ever convinced that it would take all the power of a league of nations with America in it to support the vital colonial principles for which America stood.

But the President, when he used General Smuts's suggestion, had pressed it further than General Smuts ever

intended. He universalized it. General Smuts never thought of applying the principle to the former German colonies, but only to the old empires that were to be "liquidated." But the President perceived the direct annexation of these vast colonial territories in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, with their millions of population and their great strategic, political, and economic value, to be quite as dangerous in practice and as likely to be the cause of future wars as the annexation of parts of Turkey, Russia, or Austria. He clearly foresaw the difficulties which would later arise over the control of the Pacific and of China—if the new principle was not adopted at the start.

So we find, curiously enough, in the first heated discussions of the dispositions of the German colonies, the President supporting the broad general application of the mandatory principle and General Smuts arguing, so far as German Southwest Africa was concerned, for direct annexation to his own dominion of South Africa. Indeed, the whole struggle in the council in behalf of the new principle fell upon the President: even his own Secretary of State, Mr. Lansing, was secretly opposed to him.

The discussion thus precipitated by Mr. Lloyd George, on January 23, occupied most of the time of the Council of Ten for an entire week, and developed much heat and bitterness. If the struggle was deliberately calculated as a test of the sincerity and fighting capacity of the President, it left, at the end of that week, no doubt in any one's mind of his qualities as a clear-sighted and determined fighter—and that the "old order" would not easily have its way. It has been argued that if the President had somehow managed to dominate the organization of the Conference, or dictate its programme,

that he could have "put across" his principles more completely, but this sort of fundamental difference could not have been met by any trick of organization or any cunning arrangement of programme. Sooner or later had to be met and fought out: it was of the very substance of the matter, not, as the old tacticians seemed to think, merely in the form. "A new régime is now about to be established," said the President, and scarcely man in the room believed in that new régime!

To show how little the others understood how terribly earnest the President was we find Lloyd George, who had himself introduced, on January 22, the resolutions providing for a mandatory system, remarking on January 27:

This was the first time that they had heard an exposition of the [mandatory] principle . . . A new principle had been put before them, and he would like to have it examined.

He said he was in favour of the principles of the mandatory, but he was also in favour of having the British colonies get what they wanted first. "He did not think," records the Secret Minutes, "that a special exception in favour of the Dominions would spoil the whole case." Mr. Hughes of Australia "would readily admit that the mandatory system would be applicable to other parts, but it could never apply to New Guinea." Mr. Massey, of New Zealand said he was a "great enthusiast for the League of Nations" but he was anxious not to make its burden too heavy in the beginning, and therefore he would distribute the colonies first and then "let the League of Nations start with a clean sheet." They were willing to let the President have his principles and the League after they had annexed the colonies they wanted.

The French on their part were far more honest: they made no pretense of believing either in the mandatory system or the League of Nations as methods of dealing with colonies. M. Simon, the French Colonial Minister, argued for "annexation pure and simple"; he said France asked "to be allowed to continue her work of civilization in tropical Africa." M. Simon was also prepared to base the claims of France quite frankly upon the secret treaties made earlier in the war. He indeed offered to "read two letters exchanged between M. Cambon [French Foreign Minister] and Sir Edward Grey [British Foreign Secretary] during the war, dealing with the provisional division of Togoland and the Cameroons," but he was promptly headed off by Mr. Lloyd George who "did not think it would serve any useful purpose to read these documents just then."<sup>1</sup>

Although Lloyd George was anxious not to have the secret treaties injected into the discussions at this time, it soon became plain how thoroughly the Allies considered themselves committed by these old agreements. In discussing the Pacific Islands, for example, the President soon found that he was having to argue the application of his new principle against the tenacious secret agreement between Japan and Great Britain by the terms of which Great Britain was to have all the former German Pacific Islands south of the Equator and Japan all those north of the Equator.

On January 28, the discussion came close to an open rupture.

President WILSON [as the minutes narrate] observed that the discussion so far had been, in essence, a negation in detail . . . of the whole principle of mandatories. The discussion had been brought to a point where it looked as if their roads diverged.

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 28.

Here Mr. Balfour, so often the mollifier of difficult situations, broke in with the observation that "the British Delegates did not reject the idea of a Mandatory Power." He himself was strongly in favour of the principle. The objection applied not to the "areas conquered by British arms and managed from London" but to "areas conquered by the self-governing Dominions." He would like time "to think these questions over."

President Wilson then made a powerful appeal for the acceptance of the new principle:

He admitted that the idea was a new one and it was not to be expected that it would be found developed in any records or statements. . . . Here they were at this stage when the only acceptance had been on the part of the Imperial British Government with respect to the area taken from Germany by troops under the direct authority of the Government in London. This was an important exception in which he rejoiced but it appeared to be the only exception to the rejection of the idea of trusteeship on the part of the League of Nations. . . . There must be a League of Nations, and they could not return to the *status quo ante*. . . . To secure it no sacrifice would be too great.

He could not postpone the matter any more than Mr. Lloyd George could. The date of his departure was set. . . .

When it became plain at last that the President would not give in—that he could not be fooled into accepting a vague future promise of a league with the immediate settlements upon the basis of the old military and nationalistic interests—his opponents at once, and again with great cleverness, shifted their method of attack. The French tried one way, the British another—each thoroughly characteristic of the nation attacking. At Paris, throughout the Conference, the French were always more direct and outspoken than the British. If they believed a thing they said it. One knew where Clemenceau

stood and what he intended to do; one never knew where Lloyd George stood: he never stood twice in the same place.

Thus the French, when they could not get the President to accept their blunt idea of "annexation pure and simple" in the secret conferences, began a red-hot attack upon him outside in the press, especially in those newspapers which act notoriously as instruments of the French Foreign Office. They began to comment bitterly upon the President and his "impracticable ideals." Although the proceedings behind the muffled doors at the Quai d'Orsay were supposed to be absolutely secret—so that American correspondents could get next to nothing at all concerning what was going on—the French papers were evidently fully informed. Certain British papers also published quite completely an account of the controversy between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Hughes of Australia which lost nothing in emphasis and dramatic importance nor, it may be said, in the essential truth of the facts stated, because the proceedings had been secret. Mr. Hughes gave out interviews with scarcely veiled attacks upon Mr. Wilson.

On January 30 the President protested against these attacks, as he said, "in unaffected good-humour," but as a "question of privilege."

It was stated [he said] that, as regards President Wilson's ideals, he (President Wilson) did not know how his ideals would work. If these articles continued to appear, he would find himself compelled to publish his own views. So far he had only spoken to people in that room and to members of the American Delegation, so that nothing had been communicated to the Press regarding President Wilson's views, either by himself or by his associates. . . . Nevertheless the time might come when he would be compelled against his own wishes to make a full public exposé of his views.

At once the direct attacks in the French press ceased, for the French desired no public appeal by the President upon this issue of their annexationist programme; but from that time onward, in a certain number of the papers, there was an underlying subtle spirit of criticism of the President. This constant, clever, witty opposition, so evasive as not to be easily met—the kind of criticism by innuendo of which the French are past masters—read every day by all those connected with the Peace Conference, had a profound influence in making the President's task more difficult. There were those in the American commission who suggested the removal of the Conference to some neutral city like Geneva, to escape this atmosphere.

The British upon their part had a much subtler scheme. If they could not move Wilson from his demand that the colonies come under the mandatory system, they might get the distribution made and the conditions defined in advance and apart from the Covenant of the League. They therefore advanced the tempting theory that the League "had really been born," as Lloyd George expressed it, with the passage of the resolution in the plenary session of January 25. As Hughes of Australia put it, a "*de facto* League of Nations [was] already in existence in that room." This *de facto* league could therefore parcel out the colonies—as mandates if it chose to call them so, but on conditions agreeable to the recipients. What they wanted was possession! Lloyd George had held a separate meeting of the British Empire delegation—which from all accounts was heated—and with great difficulty got the Dominion Premiers to agree to a resolution defining the mandatory system in fairly generous terms in the hope that this would satisfy the President and induce him to agree to an immediate distri-

bution. He came into the Council of Ten (January 30) and said:

Great Britain had deliberately decided to accept the principle of a mandatory: but that decision had not been wholly accepted by the Dominions. The Dominions, however, were prepared to accept the conclusions reached in the document as a compromise, because they fully realized that there could be no greater catastrophe than for the delegates to separate without having come to a definite decision. It had been decided to accept the doctrine of a mandatory for all conquests of the late Turkish Empire and in the German colonies.

The resolution then presented by Lloyd George was generous enough with respect to Turkish territories and the German lands in Central Africa—these forming two classes of mandates. But the third class, embracing German Southwest Africa and the Pacific Islands, the lands in which the Dominions were interested, was defined in terms coming as near to the outright annexation demanded as was possible while preserving any appearance of the system. They were to be “administered under the laws of the mandatory State as integral portions thereof,” and the only restrictions imposed were the “safeguards . . . in the interests of the indigenous population.” “Equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other members of the League of Nations,” in short, the “open door,” stipulated for the Central African territories, was conspicuously omitted here.

The President did not quarrel, however, with the terms of the resolution; indeed, he pronounced it “a very gratifying paper.” But he would not be hurried into action on the basis of it.

“He had been accused of being a hopeless idealist, but, as a matter of fact, he never accepted an ideal until he could see its practical application.” In the second place,

the mandatory principle depended upon the League of Nations for its proper functioning, and the League of Nations had not been worked out or adopted by the nations. "It would be impossible to refer to an undefined instrument."

In short, he was still opposed to the distribution of the colonies until he was sure of the acceptance of the entire programme. For once the islands and the African colonies were actually assigned, there would be no further interest in building up "the solid foundations," as the President expressed it, "which would carry this super-structure." The mandates must wait for the League, but the League would be rushed.

But this did not satisfy the Allies. As Baron Sonnino remarked on another occasion: "They wanted to know exactly what they were to get." And at once the controversy broke out again with renewed fury.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE remarked that with all due reference to President Wilson, he could not help saying that the statement to which they had just listened filled him with despair.

He reminded the President that the Dominion Prime Ministers had been prevailed upon to accept the mandatory idea, with difficulty, and only as a compromise.

Now, President Wilson had expressed the view that the mandatory business should not be trusted until more was known about it—that was to say, until the League of Nations was definitely set forth on paper. To this the representatives of the Dominions would obviously reply that they wished to see it working and not on paper. . . . The suggestion that the constitution of the League of Nations would be completed by the end of next week, he considered rather sanguine, as it meant formulating the constitution of the whole world. . . . To think that a federation of the whole world could be produced in nine or ten days would be ideal. However, he was only pleading for immediate peace.

It was nonsense, of course, to imply that "immediate peace" depended upon the distribution of the German islands in the Pacific or the settlement of African or even Turkish questions. There were no questions that could have been delayed so easily—which were indeed finally long delayed. The great and important problems were those right before them in Europe. But no other question could be used, tactically, so successfully and powerfully, to confound the President as this, or to make his attempt to apply the principles which they had all accepted look impossible.

President WILSON expressed the view that he had said nothing which need justify discouragement. He was willing to accept Mr. Lloyd George's proposals, subject to reconsideration when the full scheme of the League of Nations was drawn up. . . . Mr. Lloyd George said that the League of Nations had already been accepted and that it would be necessary to turn to it for the settlement of various questions. In his opinion, that view emphasized the necessity to know the instrumentality which was to deal with those questions. . . . Therefore, he would urge his colleagues to press on the drafting of the League of Nations in a definite form.

With the detailed discussion of the provision of Mr. Lloyd George's resolutions came further arguments and objections from Mr. Massey and Mr. Hughes, still in favour of direct annexation. At length, the discussion grew so acrid that President Wilson turned upon Mr. Hughes and Mr. Massey.

President WILSON asked if he was to understand that New Zealand and Australia had presented an ultimatum to the Conference. They had come there and presented their cases for annexation of New Guinea and Samoa. Was he now to understand that this was the minimum of their concession? That their agreement upon a plan depended upon that concession? And that if they could not get that

definitely now, they proposed to do what they could to stop the whole agreement?

Mr. Hughes was very deaf, and laboured under the disadvantage of not hearing the arguments of the other side of the case.

Mr. HUGHES replied that President Wilson had put it fairly well, and that that was their attitude, subject to the reservation which he had stated that morning. . . . For the present that represented the maximum of their concession in that direction.<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of this defiance both Hughes and Massey finally said they expected to accept the resolution. While the Dominions thus permitted the question of mandates to go to the League of Nations Commission, they were sore enough. The French also were bitterly disappointed, not only over this failure to get the immediate division of the colonies, but for another crucial reason. They wished to have the right in their mandatory colonies to raise native troops, not merely for police use in the colonies, but to fight for France elsewhere. Here they also met the determined opposition of President Wilson, as will be fully shown in a later chapter.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly the Japanese were also disappointed, but they held their peace and bided their time.

Such was the first great struggle of the Peace Conference. The President had made it plain that he intended to fight every attempt to adopt settlements on the "old order," that he would demand that the League be not relegated to the pious consideration of some vague future congress, but set up as an "integral part of the peace." But it was only the first battle of a long and deadly war.

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 80.

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter XXIV.

## CHAPTER XVI

### FRAMING THE COVENANT—WORK OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS COMMISSION—EFFORT TO ESCAPE FROM ATMOSPHERE OF WAR BY MEANS OF A PRELIMINARY TREATY SETTLING MILITARY, NAVAL, AND AIR TERMS

**H**AVING made it plain, in his struggle against the immediate division of the former German colonies as spoils of the war (as described in the preceding chapter) that he intended to fight every attempt to adopt settlements on the “old order,” and having won, by the famous resolution of January 25, his essential demand that the League of Nations be an “integral part of the general treaty of peace,” the President now had to proceed, under pressure and as swiftly as possible, to the business of making the constitution of that League. His plan was ready, as was shown in a former chapter, and on February 3 the first meeting of the League of Nations Commission was held.

But if he had won the acknowledgment of what he considered the “key of the whole settlement”—the most important action in some respects of the entire Peace Conference—the other Allies were still in an enormously strong tactical position. They had two methods of countering the President’s purpose, and they now tried both. The first was to press forward with the actual settlements according to their own interests and the secret treaties and get what they wanted while the project for a league of nations was tied up in the preliminary dis-

cussions of the League of Nations Commission. I have already described how they attempted this course in seeking to divide up the German colonies as "spoils of war"—and how the President headed them off. Failing in this, they were ready with the other method, which was to get the kind of a league of nations they wanted. With a covenant that suited them they were ready enough to have it an integral part of the Treaty. If the French, for example, could get a league which was a military alliance with an international army (commanded, of course, by French generals) and the possibility of universal compulsory military service—which they tried to get—they would be more than glad to have it tied up with and knit into any treaty that might be made.

It is plain then why the interest shifted, after February 3, from the Council of Ten to the League of Nations Commission. The President himself, as I have said, recognized the great importance of this struggle by becoming chairman of the Commission and leading the fight. He had got the League accepted as a part of the peace: now he must get the kind of league the Americans wanted.

It was not without significance that the headquarters of the Council of Ten, where the territorial and economic and military settlements were being made, was in the old French Foreign Office, by the Seine, in the atmosphere and surroundings of the old diplomacy, while the headquarters of the League of Nations Commission was in the temporary and informal quarters of the American Commission at the Hotel Crillon—entirely devoid of traditions. One was secret with "careful leakage"; the other was practically open to the world. One had in it only the great Powers; the other had both great and small Powers. One looked back; the other forward.

One was concerned chiefly with the immediate interests and fears of the great allied Powers; the other with the future stability, peace, and justice of the entire world.

For the next six weeks, from February 3 to the middle of March—the period which included the making of the Covenant (February 3–14) and the President's trip home to America (February 15–March 14)—the attention of the world was kept to a large degree upon the American programme, the “new order,” the League of Nations. It was the great and hopeful period of the Conference. The Americans were apparently winning; the Crillon had usurped the place of the Quai d'Orsay. It was a brilliant piece of strategy, and the President here showed his great powers to the uttermost.

But the world is very old; habit is old, tradition is old; the Quai d'Orsay has been there by the Seine a long, long time. It is gray with age. Great stone walls and iron gates surround it. It waits there in its entrenchments. It looks across the Place de la Concorde toward the Hotel Crillon and waits. It is wise and cynical—and sure! What has been, it says, will be. “We live dead men's lives,” says Clemenceau, quoting Comte, “and it is true.” Yes, Clemenceau—and the French—are indeed the personification of the old. And Wilson and the Americans personify the new.

No one at Paris more closely typified the new than Colonel House—from Texas. Texas and Paris! Texas—with little background but with ideals and slogans, full of pioneer neighbourliness yet with a shrewd judgment of men: direct, bold, and optimistic, yet too ready to think that problems are settled in the heart rather than in the head—Texas is the veritable antipodes of Paris.

Thus history appropriately stages her great events. It was in Colonel House's office at the Crillon—on the

third floor—that this meeting of the nations to make a new world constitution was held. You went up quickly in an elevator—and there you were.

It was Colonel House who cunningly staged the meetings. The President sat at the head of the table. On his right was Orlando, the Italian Premier, the only other chief of a great power. On his left sat Colonel House himself, active, bright-eyed, watchful, silent. In a chair just behind and between them, leaning forward to whisper, was the American legal adviser of the Commission, David Hunter Miller. On Colonel House's left were the British members, Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts. This was what may be called the pro-league bloc. Farther away sat the French delegates, M. Bourgeois and M. Larnaudie, who may be called the opposition.

Baron Makino and Viscount Chinda were there for Japan: silent, unemotional, but watchful; rising with power only when their own interests were affected. Koo, for China, spoke much more than the Japanese put together and was nearer the American position than any other delegate. Belgium, Brazil, Portugal, and Serbia were represented in the earlier meetings, and later Greece—headed by able Venizelos—Poland, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia were added to the Commission.

In point of time consumed in the discussion M. Bourgeois of France spoke more than all the other members of the Commission combined. The President, as presiding officer, was over-indulgent in welcoming discussion: and he made one great speech—on the Monroe Doctrine. It was not reported, but those who heard it join in declaring that it was one of the greatest speeches he made in Europe. These men, several of whom, like the President and Orlando, were hard-worked in other conferences, met here in fifteen sessions (ten before the President

went home, five after he returned), mostly held in the evening, and some of them dragging into the weary hours beyond midnight. It was the hardest-driven commission at Paris. The President drove it, knowing how much the element of time counted, how the settlements being eagerly pressed in the Council of Ten turned upon it, how completely the American programme was bound up in it.

The first meeting was on February 3 at 2:30 in the afternoon. Three proposed drafts for a constitution of a future league of nations were presented there for the consideration of the delegates: the American-British draft, the French draft, and the Italian draft. The President's plan for the Covenant as it was evolved through three drafts has been described in Chapter XIII. This had to be reconciled with the British plan, and a compromise draft was produced by D. H. Miller for America and C. J. B. Hurst for Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> This was satisfactory to neither side, particularly not to the President, but was finally accepted as the basis for discussion. This in itself was a distinct tactical victory. It placed the French, who were the only strong opponents, in the position of critics seeking amendments to a document already tentatively accepted. France was as much hampered at the Crillon as was America at the Quai d'Orsay.

Ten meetings of the League of Nations Commission were held before the President sailed for home, the last on February 13, at 3:30 o'clock, in settling these diversities of view regarding the Covenant. It would have been relatively easy to reconcile the views of the Americans and the British, but the controversy with the French (and Italians), once the discussion opened in the Com-

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 18, for full text of the Miller-Hurst draft.

mission, revealed almost irreconcilable differences as to what, fundamentally, the League should be and do.<sup>1</sup>

Several groups of issues were raised in these discussions:

1. Organization and Representation.
2. Machinery of Arbitration.
3. Guarantees.
4. The Mandatory System.
5. Minority Rights: Racial and Religious.
6. Limitation of Armaments.
7. Commercial Equality and Freedom of Transit.

The last five of these groups are so important that they require special development. The subject of colonies and mandatory system has been dealt with in the preceding chapter. The question of guarantees was discussed at some length in Chapter XIII, and will be taken up again in connection with the revision of the Covenant. It must be noted here, however, that the qualifying clauses of the President's article, allowing for the revision of the *status quo*, were omitted from the Hurst-Miller draft; so that the final form of Article X became a flat guarantee of the treaty settlements, except in so far as modified by Article XI, which permits threats to the peace of the world to be brought before the Council by any member. The three final topics are treated in other connections.

From the very beginning it was Wilson's idea, of course, that all nations should come into the League. Some delay might occur before Germany and other enemy nations were admitted, but sooner or later they, too, should come in.

If it was a real league with mutual guarantees of any

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<sup>1</sup>Since the interest of the French plan lay mainly in its development of military sanctions, description and discussion of it are reserved for Part IV—see especially Chapter XX. For complete text of the plan see Volume III, Document 17.

value, not a mere conference or court like The Hague Tribunal, there must be some instrumentality of control. What should this be? What nations should be represented?

Two ideas at once emerged regarding this vital problem, for the stronger the League the more important was the problem of organization and representation:

1. Undisguised and complete control by the great Powers. This was Cecil's plan (December, 1918), and it was practically that of the Holy Alliance of 1815. During the great war, especially toward the last of it, there had developed a kind of diplomacy by conference in which the heads of the great States had met and decided the course of the allied nations.<sup>1</sup> It had worked excellently in war: why not continue it?

2. Control by a body or bodies consisting of representatives of both great and small Powers, but with final decisions resting with the great Powers. This was undoubtedly Wilson's original idea, but it was not worked out. It was also Smuts's, and Wilson embodied Smuts's more detailed proposals in his second (first printed) draft. It was the development of the exact lines of the system which caused the discussion.

Wilson's real attitude toward control by the great Powers is clear. While the other leaders—except possibly Smuts—were thinking always of this control in terms of the rights and interests of the great Powers, Wilson was always thinking of it as a responsibility, a burden, a duty. He never lost sight of the larger moral issues, and can therefore never be understood by critics of whom Lansing is a type, to whom such arrangements must either be based upon a fictitious "equality of rights" or a balance

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<sup>1</sup>See valuable study, "Diplomacy of Conference," by Sir Maurice Hankey, *The Round Table*, March, 1921.



President Wilson sailing to America on the *George Washington*, with the completed Covenant of the League of Nations, February 15, 1919

ganized are admitted to the Council under two provisions—a regular minority representation and a special representation when their interests are involved. This Council, with the Assembly, made up of all nations, forms the bony framework of the League.

The question, much discussed in America, of representation of the British Dominions in the League was never discussed directly at all in the Commission. Wilson had at first opposed their special representation in the Peace Conference, but having yielded in this point, could not contest it in regard to the League.

The discussion of representation and organization had pretty well cleared away what may be called the executive and legislative functions, however rudimentary, of the League. There remained the judicial functions.

In the beginning Wilson was against a permanent judicial body as an organ of the League. Colonel House, as was shown in a preceding chapter, provided for such a court in his draft of the Covenant, thought it necessary, and predicted that it might have a great future. Wilson omitted it from his drafts. He relied instead wholly upon the arbitral machinery provided in all former League proposals, which he put into Article V of his first draft. A long and complicated discussion of this whole subject ensued, both in the original ten sessions in which the Covenant was drafted and in the five during which it was revised. Since these discussions relate chiefly to matters of procedure rather than to matters of principle, they need not here be developed. Suffice it to say that both the Permanent Court of International Justice (Article XIV) and an elaborate system of arbitration (Articles XIII, XIII, XV) were established. Since that time the Court has actually been organized and had its first session (1922) at The Hague.

So the League was worked out in the Commission.<sup>1</sup>

On February 14, the most important and interesting of all the plenary sessions of the Peace Conference was held. The completed Covenant was presented and read aloud by the President.

I am happy to say that it is a unanimous report from the Representatives of fourteen nations.

His speech was ardent and hopeful.

A living thing is born. . . . While it is elastic, while it is general in its terms, it is definite in the one thing that we are called upon to make definite. It is a definite guarantee of peace. It is a definite guarantee by word against aggression.

He is also clear as to how these guarantees shall be enforced. He says:

Armed force is in the background in this programme, but it is in the background, and if the moral force of the world will not suffice, the physical force of the world shall. But that is the last resort, because this is intended as a constitution of peace, not as a League of War.

He also lays stress upon the use of the League, not only to guarantee peace, but in other matters of international co-operation.

It is not in contemplation that this should be merely a League to secure the peace of the world. It is a League that can be used for co-operation in any international matter.

The President had thus got his covenant, but just before he departed from Europe to present it to his own people (February 15) he had to meet one other great and vital problem which had been troubling him from the beginning.

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 18, for text of the Covenant of February 14,

Plenary Conference, 14 February, 1919.

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Introduction of the Report, unanimously adopted by the Commission, in which were represented the five Great Powers and nine of the other Powers. \*

Reading of the Report.

Character of the discussions and significance of the result.

Character of the document:

- 2. No straight-jacket, but a vehicle of life.
- 1. Simplicity of constitution, elasticity of representation.
- 3. Peace upon definite guarantees.
- Cooperation upon broad lines. (Labour)
- A League of free states.
- Open agreements.
- Mandatories (no annexations)

A PRACTICAL and HUMANE document which should ~~speedily~~, purify and enrich the life of the world.

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* United States	Belgium, Brazil, China,
Great Britain	Czecho-Slovakia, Greece,
France	Poland, Portugal, Rumania,
Italy	Serbia.
Japan	

President Wilson's private memorandum written by him on his own typewriter for his speech at the Plenary Session of February 14

This related to what might be called the atmosphere of the Peace Conference.

The war was, indeed, hardly over. Paris lived in an atmosphere of alarms, of armies on the alert, of still-

gaping wounds and still-smouldering ruins. It was the kind of atmosphere that might be favourable to the making of a hard, bitter, retributive peace such as the "old order" wanted: it was not the atmosphere in which a peace of "distinterested justice" or a correcting and tempering organization such as the League of Nations could breathe and work.

The Americans early felt the absolute need of getting out of this atmosphere, getting the war over with and the military and naval terms settled. Then the peace conditions could be taken up in calmer mood. General Bliss, at the armistice negotiations, had stood stoutly for demanding the immediate disarmament of Germany. If the German Army was demobilized, he argued, and armament surrendered, then the allied armies could also be quickly demobilized and sent home. Normal conditions would sooner return and the peace could be discussed on a fairer basis.

But Bliss was outvoted by the other Allies. The French feared, above all things, the quick demobilization of the great allied armies, and were against anything, even the immediate disarmament of Germany, which would lead to that end. Their programme was to cripple Germany and at the same time keep up the powerful allied armies. They had two reasons for this policy:

First, they had stern and sweeping terms to demand, including the permanent economic shackling and future military control of Germany, and these could not be imposed without the threat of large armies afoot and ready to march at once to Berlin.

Second, the more extreme French militarists, as Foch proposed in the very first days of the Conference and afterward urged repeatedly, wanted to use these vast armies—

including the 2,000,000 fresh young soldiers from America —to march across Germany and subdue Russia. He had Napoleonic dreams of colossal new wars in which the conquest of Russia was an element.

In judging these plans, of course, it must always be remembered how France felt, how she had suffered, what danger she had so narrowly escaped, how utterly she distrusted and feared her enemy across the Rhine. German policies of economic, as well as military, destruction in Belgium and northern France had given them a vivid idea of what the Germans would have done if they had won. France was in reality suffering from a kind of national "shell-shock."

But the function of the Americans at Paris was precisely not to be carried away by these extreme demands, this nervous apprehension, which did not represent reason but panic fear. Wilson saw, on the other hand, the absolute basic necessity of guaranteeing France from attack —thus relieving her fear—and this he proposed to do by the strong and direct mutual guarantee of all the nations in Article X of the Covenant. And later, when this did not quiet the French, he made even more sure the guarantee by agreeing to a special Anglo-American compact to protect France until the League could become solidly organized: a compact bitterly assailed in America and not ratified by the Senate. And yet how to get peace in the world and secure some real measure of disarmament, without relieving French (and other national) fears, these opponents of the President's constructive plans did not say.

Having thus agreed (in the Covenant) to defend France "from external aggression," it was then obviously the function, the bounden duty, of the Americans to mitigate extreme demands, to get reasonable settlements—settle-

ments that would stand after the war, and not lead quickly to new wars of revenge and reprisal.

Consequently the President struggled, at every turn, to get as quickly as possible out of the atmosphere of military force and away from control of the generals. He fought the whole French programme for the economic crippling of Germany, for the permanent military control of German industry, for the use of the allied armies against Russia. The French proposed, in discussing the monthly renewal of the Armistice, which was due to come about the time Wilson was sailing for America, to expand the terms and add new conditions which could be imposed only by the threat to use the armies. Wilson and Bliss were utterly against this. They argued that an agreement had been made with Germany on November 11 and that they could not, in honour, change it. Both were also against the idea of a military peace.

There were stormy sessions over these problems in the Ten, especially on February 7 and 12, chiefly between Wilson and Clemenceau. The British on the whole sided with the Americans; the Italians sympathized with the French, but did not, at this stage, assert themselves.

But in spite of the French demands, events were inexorably working against them. It was utterly impossible to maintain the huge allied armies. Lloyd George felt that he could delay demobilization only at great political risk to himself. As for Wilson, he was for getting the boys home "as fast as ships could carry them." Even Clemenceau (but not Foch) was worried by the popular demand in France that the war-weary veterans be released.

The struggle came to a head on February 12, three days before the President sailed. It was a direct clash over the renewal of the Armistice (on February 16). Clemenceau wanted new terms, which were in effect

reparations, imposed at the Armistice: he wanted the renewal to be for another month; he wanted the allied armies maintained. Wilson demanded that the final military and naval terms be drawn up and presented to the Germans, so that Germany could be disarmed at once and completely, and the allied armies immediately demobilized. But Clemenceau fairly raged at this, charged Wilson with "putting the question in an academic, theoretical, and doctrinal light," said "he knew the Germans," and that the only safety lay in keeping up an army to intimidate them. He had no confidence in anything but a military peace imposed upon them, nor any but a long-continued economic control backed by military force.

Here Balfour came strongly to the support of the President and presented resolutions providing that the Armistice should be renewed practically on the former terms, for an indefinite period, and that the final military and naval terms be immediately drawn up in the form of a preliminary treaty and presented to the Germans.

This was directly opposed to Clemenceau's demands, but in the afternoon session of that day he accepted it.

Wilson had thus won his contentions. There was to be a preliminary treaty containing the military, naval, and air terms. This was to be worked out by a committee of military experts while he was away in America. He said:

He had complete confidence in the views of his military advisers. . . . He did not wish his absence to stop so important, essential and urgent work as the preparation of a preliminary peace [as to military, naval and air terms]. He hoped to return by the 13th or 15th March, allowing himself only a week in America. . . . He had asked Colonel House to take his place while he was away.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 12.

He felt this quick settlement of the military terms a most important move. It fitted in perfectly with his other plans for the peace. By the time he returned the troublesome military and naval terms would be out of the way and, the League of Nations having been accepted, the Conference could proceed to draw up the broad general terms of settlement under calmer conditions. His plan, as he said (February 12), "would make safety antedate the peace."

When President Wilson sailed out of Brest Harbour for America on that wintry February day (the 15th) with the guns booming from the ancient French forts and French marines at salute along the walls, he had reason enough to feel triumphant. He was on his way homeward with the hard-won constitution of a new world league—the essential element of the American programme—in his pocket. It had been unanimously accepted, at the Conference the day before, by all the nations. He was carrying it back to present to his own people.

The first month of the Peace Conference, from January 12 to February 15, had been a remarkable one. At its beginning, as previous chapters have shown, the tide seemed to be settling heavily against Wilson and the American conception of the settlements. There had been a world-wide "slump in idealism." The "old order" had come into the conferences at Paris quite confident of itself. But the President, by a series of bold and skillful strokes, had snatched the reins of leadership, had brought the American programme strongly into the foreground, and during a large part of the time the League of Nations Commission shared the "spotlight" of the world's interest with the Councils of the Quai d'Orsay. He had blocked, one after another, projects of the old order to make settlements according to their own con-

ceptions of the peace; the most important being their effort to divide immediately the "spoils of the war," the German colonies. He had secured an arrangement for getting the main labours of the Conference out of the atmosphere of war. And, finally, he had won, decisively, in the two great central purposes for which he had come to Europe.

First, he had secured, on January 25, the unanimous acceptance of what he considered the "key of the whole settlement"—that the League of Nations be made "an integral part of the general treaty of peace."

Second, he had secured, on February 14, the unanimous acceptance of a covenant that reasonably satisfied the American purposes.

It had been a hard fight: in spite of the greatest difficulties and against tremendous odds the American programme—the "new order," as the President was fond of calling it—seemed to be winning. As a matter of fact, the President was safe on no point: the real battles were yet to come.

Although the President could say with satisfaction that there had been "unanimous agreement" to both of his great central proposals, as a matter of fact, none of the Allies was satisfied. They felt that they had been beaten; they were discontented with the results. They saw no way, according to the President's programme, to get what they really wanted—the security they thought they needed, the territorial and economic ambitions they hoped to realize under the secret treaties.

Consider the situation. The British Dominions had failed in their efforts to drive through an immediate partition of the German colonies. Under pressure they had accepted the mandate resolution of January 30, and had seen it incorporated in the Covenant, but it had not

brought forth the hoped-for cutting of the colonial pie. So long as that was held up, they saw little reason to be pleased either with the Covenant or with its inelusion with the treaty of peace.

The French were even more bitterly disappointed with the course of events. They had accepted the plan of having the Covenant an integral part of the Treaty on January 25 because they felt sure of one or both of two things, either of getting the settlements they wanted before the League could be brought into being, or of getting the kind of a league they wanted. But they had got neither. Their plan for a league—a strong, centralized organization with powerful military forces at its disposal, which had formed an indispensable feature of their whole elaborate programme of security—had been relentlessly voted down in the League of Nations Commission. The League, as it stood on February 14, was thus not satisfactory to them, and although M. Bourgeois had stoutly declared at the plenary session that he was not through with his fight, the Covenant had been unanimously accepted and there seemed small hope of getting substantial changes. Much better sidetracked and work all the harder for the other measures of real security!

The Japanese, too, had reason to be sore, though they remained silent, for their racial equality clause, which touched their pride to the quick, had met the same fate as the French amendments. Moreover, they—and the French also, for that matter—shared the disappointment of the British dominions in not getting, at once, their share of the German colonies. The Japanese had also made clear their purposes regarding Shantung—and had been put off.

While the Italians who were chiefly interested in the

Austrian settlements had not been greatly active thus far in the discussions, they decidedly did not like the looks of a settlement such as the President was evidently set upon getting.

No sooner, then, had the President sailed away than the gates were opened for a great flood of dissatisfaction—which soon developed into a remarkable diplomatic intrigue.

His absence at this time was probably inevitable: nevertheless, it was dangerous. It left the forces of the “new order” without effective generalship; it gave opportunity for all the elements that were against him and against settlements on the American basis, to get their breath, to reconstruct their positions, to begin a powerful counter movement. If the President had remained at Paris straight along to carry forward his offensive, to “consolidate his gains,” final results might have been different. But he was not there.

For this reason, the month while the President’s back was turned becomes, to the student, one of the most interesting and significant of the entire Conference.

## CHAPTER XVII

WHILE WILSON WAS AWAY—ATTEMPTS TO SIDETRACK THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS—BAFOUR RESOLUTION OF FEBRUARY 22—WILSON'S VITAL DECLARATION OF MARCH 15, THAT THE "LEAGUE OF NATIONS SHOULD BE MADE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TREATY OF PEACE"—BEGINNING OF COLDNESS BETWEEN PRESIDENT WILSON AND COLONEL HOUSE

**N**O SOONER had the President left Paris, on February 15, than the forces of opposition and discontent began to act. On February 24, resolutions were adopted by the Council of Ten which, if carried through, would wreck the entire American scheme for the peace.

It was exceedingly shrewd strategy these skilled diplomats played. They did not like the League as drafted and they did not want the Covenant in the Treaty, but they made no direct attack on either proposal. The League was scarcely mentioned in the conferences until just before the President returned.

Their strategy was as simple as it was ingenious. They had been left, as was shown in the last chapter, with resolutions which the President had strongly supported, to make quickly a preliminary peace treaty including only military, naval, and air terms. What was easier or more obvious than to generalize that treaty, put into it also all the other terms that really mattered to them—boundaries, reparations, colonies: in short, crowd the whole peace into the preliminary treaty without any reference to the League. This would get them the settle-

ments they wanted, and it would prevent demobilization of the allied armies until the terms were imposed upon the Germans. It was just another aspect of the French attempt, which had already been balked by Wilson and Bliss, to crowd peace terms into the Armistice and thus get them imposed by military force before the Treaty, let alone the League, was even discussed. If the League got squeezed out in the process, or was consigned to some innocuous future conference after all the settlements were made, who cared?

Thus while it is too much to say that there was a direct plot, while Wilson was away, to kill the League or even cut it out of the Treaty, one can affirm with certainty that there was an intrigue against his plan of a preliminary military and naval peace—which would have indirectly produced the same result.

It seemed that every militaristic and nationalistic force came instantly to the front when Wilson departed. Lloyd George had gone home, but instead of leaving the liberal leaders in control in Paris, men who were imbued with the purposes laid down in the League—Cecil, Smuts, and Barnes—who were indeed Lloyd George's associates on the British Peace Commission, he sent over Winston Churchill, the most militaristic of British leaders. Churchill was not a member of the peace delegation and had had nothing before to do with the Peace Conference. Moreover, he was a rampant opponent of the League. Part of the time also Sir Robert Borden, the Canadian leader, sat in the Supreme Council. While he asked nothing for Canada, he strongly supported the claims of the other British dominions for an immediate distribution of the German colonies. These men, with Mr. Balfour and Lord Milner, were thus to direct British affairs at Paris while the President was away.

The first thing that Winston Churchill did was to demand instant action regarding Russia, and he practically supported Foch's Napoleonic scheme, which was now resurrected with new determination, for applying military force against Soviet Russia. Great armies were to be gathered, including the Americans, and a vast war was to be waged to pacify eastern Europe.

On the morning of February 19, just as Clemenceau was getting into his automobile to go to the Conference, an assassin crept up and shot him.

"I am a Frenchman and an Anarchist," shouted Cottin.

"The animal shoots well," said Clemenceau as he pitched forward. "It is nothing."

But the hard-knit, formidable old man at least had to go to bed. This left Balfour the outstanding statesman at the Conference, with Pichon, who represented everything that was old in diplomacy, in charge of the French delegation. While Clemenceau was no liberal, yet he had wisdom. Thus Foch, whom only Clemenceau could keep in hand, rose powerfully into the foreground.

Curiously also—and as though it were part of a well-worked-out plan—Orlando, who represented the liberal forces in Italy, had also gone home, leaving Sonnino, without doubt the most reactionary statesman at Paris, in control.

As for America, Mr. Lansing was titular head of the delegation, although President Wilson had told the Council of Ten (February 12) that he had asked "Colonel House to take his place while he was away."

Not one word was said in the Council about the preliminary military terms—the most important outstanding business before them—for an entire week. But conferences, we know, were busily going on behind the

scenes. We have Mr. Balfour's own word, spoken in the secret councils, that he consulted privately with M. Pichon, and even, so important did he consider the matter, that he went with M. Pichon to see Clemenceau, then lying ill of his wounds.

In the session of February 22, Balfour introduced his extraordinary new resolution, providing that the Council proceed without delay to the consideration of other preliminary peace terms with Germany—these including the frontiers of Germany, financial and economic arrangements, responsibility for breaches of the laws of war (and later, colonies)—practically everything except the League of Nations! The resolution also demanded hurry—and directed that commissions send in their reports “not later than Saturday, March 8”—which was a week before President Wilson could return.<sup>1</sup>

Although this proposal had not even been mentioned before in the Council and there is no recorded discussion, it was instantly and enthusiastically accepted—save by Lord Milner (as will be shown later) and by Sonnino,

<sup>1</sup>Text of the Balfour Resolution of February 22, from Secret Minutes, Council of Ten:

(1) Without prejudice to the decision of the Supreme War Council to present Naval, Military and Air Conditions of Peace, to Germany at an early date, the Conference agrees that it is desirable to proceed without delay to the consideration of other preliminary Peace Terms with Germany and to press on the necessary investigations with all possible speed.

(2) The Preliminary Peace Terms, other than the Naval, Military and Air Conditions, shall cover the following points:

- (a) The approximate future frontiers of Germany:
- (b) The financial arrangements to be imposed on Germany:
- (c) Our economic relations with Germany after the war:
- (d) Responsibility for breaches of the Laws of War.

(3) In order that the Conference may have at its disposal with the least possible delay the result of the labours of the various Commissions which have been investigating these subjects it is requested that the various Commissions will send in their reports to the Secretary-General not later than Saturday, March 8th. This will not apply to Commissions set up after February 15th which may be unable to render their final reports at so early a date, but it is requested that in these cases interim reports may be presented dealing with all matters affecting the preliminaries of Peace with Germany.

who was not opposed to the principle but who did not want the German settlements made ahead of the Austrian. Here are the comments:

M. Picton agreed that Mr. Balfour had very correctly interpreted M. Clemenceau's views. M. Clemenceau held that the whole of the Preliminary Peace Terms should be pressed forward with as little delay as possible in order to take full advantage of the present situation in Germany. In this opinion M. Clemenceau was supported by Marshal Foch and his military advisers.

Mr. House said he was very glad to see that the Conference intended to bring about as soon as possible a Preliminary Peace. . . . He had always felt that delay could only be favourable to Germany and the longer the signing of Peace were postponed, the more chance would there be of circumstances becoming less favourable to the Allies. In regard to the two proposals now before the Conference, very severe military terms would have to be imposed on the Germans. And he thought the Germans would be more inclined to accept those conditions if, at the same time, the whole Peace Terms were made known to them. . . .

Mr. LANSING [said] . . . he would prefer to embody all the terms of a preliminary peace in one document . . . He thoroughly agreed with M. Clemenceau's viewpoint.<sup>1</sup>

The only sincere support of Wilson's proposal was from Lord Milner, who had been present when it was accepted on February 12 (just as Lansing had been) and now proposed to stand upon the agreement made at that time. He thought it "more important than anything else for the Conference to devote its time to a consideration of the final naval and military terms with Germany. Once an agreement was reached on that subject, one compartment of the peace work would be finally dispensed with." At the following meeting Lord Milner returned again, more vigorously, to the argument, expressing almost

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 22.

exactly the idea of President Wilson and General Bliss. He said (we have here a verbatim report):

Speaking for myself, personally, I still think that the final disarmament of Germany, I mean our bringing her down to that degree of strength for war purposes which we are willing to allow her permanently to maintain, is extremely urgent, that it is a step which we ought to take as soon as we possibly can, and that it is a step which, when taken, will greatly expedite the acceptance . . . of all other conditions of peace. It is also an absolutely essential preliminary to our own demobilization.

But, of course, demobilization was exactly what the French did not want! And, as Pichon said, Clemenceau was in agreement with Foch; and Balfour, Lansing, and House were in agreement with Clemenceau. Colonel House indeed responded to Lord Milner's argument as follows:

Mr. House persisted in his opinion that the Conference should go back to Mr. Balfour's original proposal as regards Germany.

With both French and Americans and Mr. Balfour, the leading British delegate, against him, it was useless for Lord Milner to pursue the argument.

One nation remained yet to be heard from, Japan. The Japanese delegates, Makino and Matsui, waited always, like their own stone Buddhas, in silence, until something arose that really concerned them. Then, in a low voice, in the fewest possible words, with an almost apologetic air, at the end of the meeting, they shot as straight as did their soldiers at Port Arthur.

Baron MAKINO enquired whether the approximate future frontiers of Germany referred to in paragraph 2 (a) [of the Balfour resolution], included the German colonies.

Mr. BALFOUR replied that it was intended to include the colonies. . . .

M. MATSUI enquired, with reference to paragraph 2 (a) whether that would include all rights, such as rights over the railways and mines in China acquired by Germany.

Mr. BALFOUR thought that the words "*inter alia*" would cover such questions.

Mr. LANSING agreed, and remarked that the words "*inter alia*" would also cover the question of prisoners of war, which he had intended to raise separately.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the Japanese, having inquired as to colonies, railroads, mines, Shantung, and been generously reassured by Mr. Balfour, relapsed again into silence. Here was where the Shantung settlement, so bitterly attacked in America, was begun—while Wilson was away.

By this simple process everyone had been assured of getting all the "practical details" into the preliminary treaty—boundaries, reparations, colonies, mines, railroads—without hindrance from the clogging idealism of Wilson's principles or reference to the League of Nations.

Most difficult to explain are the reasons why Mr. Balfour had fathered this movement. The British had been eager, as Lord Milner argued, to reach conditions permitting demobilization ahead of the long debates on other terms. Balfour himself (Lloyd George having just gone home) had drawn up and supported the resolutions, only ten days before, formulating Wilson's plan for a preliminary military treaty. He had apparently stood—at that time—strongly with Wilson.

What had converted him so suddenly?

The complete answer is probably: Lloyd George.

Lloyd George had gone home, like Wilson, to report to the country; there had been a great and heated Cabinet meeting. Conditions in Russia, which had been most unsatisfactory, had been presented. Churchill was there de-

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<sup>1</sup> Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 22.

manding a new and vigorous Russian policy, and no doubt attacking "this nonsense" of a league of nations. There had also been aired another thing—the bitter discontent of the Dominion Premiers over not getting the colonies that they wanted—for Premier Hughes of Australia had been making irritating speeches in London. Everyone, also, was beginning to be impatient at the delay—the peace must be hurried!

Lloyd George had evidently suffered one of his characteristic catapultic changes of opinion. Opposition, which always hardened Wilson behind his principles, had exactly the contrary effect upon the mercurial Welshman, who had politics but no principles—it sent him bounding to the other extreme. Lloyd George began to think he had gone too far with this league business. So he sent over to Paris the most militaristic leader of them all, Churchill, and a few days later Balfour made his extraordinary change of programme.

Balfour was one of the most fascinating figures at the Peace Conference. A truly remarkable intellect, no memoranda prepared at Paris, no arguments in the conferences, are more brilliant or witty than his. His memorandum on the Turkish settlements with references to Italian claims is a literary classic. It was beautiful to see him at work, with this half-ironical philosophic interest in events. But he was to his very marrow a conservative, and his philosophy one of doubt (as Wilson's philosophy was one of faith); he was ever sure, "like the very English Hamlet, of the disadvantage of every course of action." With Wilson's powerful and stimulating leadership he had come far—too far! With Wilson gone, the prospect looked bleak and the struggle hard; peace quickly and on any terms seemed infinitely desirable, especially a peace that would satisfy

quickly the clamouring British Dominions and get the Empire what it wanted in Turkey. With a man at his side like Churchill, who knew violently and explosively what he wanted, and a leader at home who wanted one thing to-day and the opposite to-morrow—Balfour introduced his resolution of February 22.

This can be said truly: if Lloyd George had loyally and steadfastly stood by the plan agreed to by the Council of Ten on February 12 to make a preliminary military and naval peace, it would have gone through.

What about the Americans? Of Lansing little need be said. He was against the League as drafted, he was against including it in the Treaty. He had no glimmer of the President's vision of the peace, or of the part America should play in it. While he had had no definite instructions from the President (as he stated in his book) as to what to do while the President was away, yet he had been in every session of the council, knew fully what was going on, knew what the President had fought for and wanted, and had himself accepted the resolution providing for a preliminary military treaty. Yet the moment the President turned his back he agreed fully with Balfour and Clemenceau and Foch in a scheme which would wreck the President's whole plan. He never apparently thought of supporting the President's resolution: he probably never even sensed the larger diplomatic consequences of the move, or understood what was being "put over."

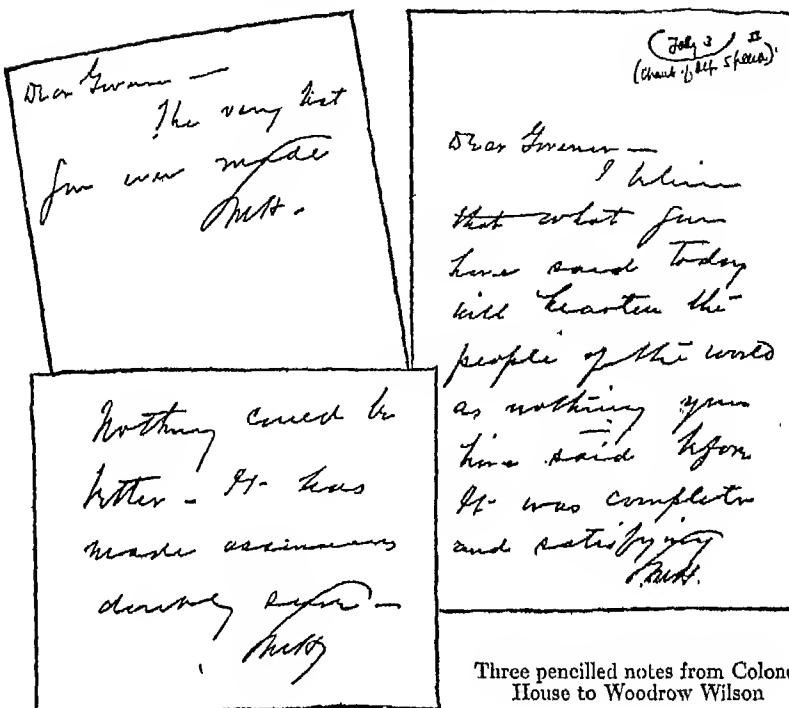
Colonel House's situation was far more complicated. He had not been in the Council of Ten; he did not, like Lansing, know fully the course of the struggle. He had not been in touch with the inner strategy as Lansing had. President Wilson had told the Council that he was leaving House to take his place, but had not fully explained to or instructed House. Here again entered one

of the President's peculiar limitations—his inability to explain himself, his assumption that the minds of his associates, having accepted his leadership, would necessarily follow along his own clear, vivid, swift-leaping logical processes. He always assumed that moral or emotional support meant also clear intellectual understanding—which does not at all follow. This assumption as applied to the people at large, as well as to close associates, lay at the root of many of the President's most serious difficulties. Having said a thing once, he seemed to think it was all clearly understood and accepted—was it not reasonable?—while, as many a humbler politician could have told him, it had to be repeated a thousand times, published in every newspaper, put in the movies, set to music!

Colonel House for years had been of the greatest service to this lonely thinker and leader. He had been a true friend where friendship was difficult; he had not wanted anything for himself where everyone was clamouring for offices or honours. He had many of the qualities that the President lacked; a genius for understanding human beings, a love of personal contacts, a spirit of friendly compromise. He broke through, with an irrepressible, Texan good-fellowship, the President's defenses and inhibitions. One cannot resist Colonel House! Long after it was supposed that the President and Colonel House had "broken," after the President was ill, he said at a meeting of his Cabinet, when someone ventured to criticize House:

"I have a great affection for Colonel House."

Among the President's papers are to be found, carefully preserved, many little pencilled notes of Colonel House sent to him at Paris or elsewhere, after some speech or in connection with some proposed resolution.



Three pencilled notes from Colonel House to Woodrow Wilson

Here are samples:

Dear Governor: The very best you ever made.

E. M. H.

Nothing could be better. It has made assurance doubly sure.

E. M. H.

After the President's powerful speech on February 3 in the French Chamber of Deputies this pencilled note came from the Colonel:

Dear Governor: I believe that what you have said to-day will hearten the people of the world as nothing you have said before. It was complete and satisfying.

This was no mere flattery: it was meant and felt; and it was infinitely cheering to the President.

So long as Colonel House was what Clemenceau called "an ear, but not a mouth," silent, listening, reporting veraciously and voluminously to the President, everything went well. His help was great and valuable. The President thus secured facts, views, knowledge of personalities, that otherwise he could not have had. House furnished the raw material which the President needed in his thinking. Along with his human likeableness House had a tested shrewdness in judgment of men and events. The President could take or leave his facts and opinions—as he did do—and act then as he pleased.

But when Colonel House was placed in a great position where action based upon utterly clear thinking and sharp and definite decisions were required, he began to suffer from the defects of his own qualities. Instinctively and emotionally he was as truly liberal as the President and he was a loyal supporter of the League of Nations: but he had never thought through. He never knew quite where he was, but he was always optimistic. There was nothing hard, clear, sure, definite, in his intellectual processes. He liked and sympathized with people and hated to decide against them; he wanted to get them all together, use soft words, and assure them that there were no real differences of view—when there were. Thus when Lord Milner was arguing against Marshal Foch regarding the plan for a preliminary military treaty on February 24, we find this remark:

Mr. House expressed the view that in reality no difference of opinion existed between the Members of the Conference.

Well, the deepest and the most vital differences did exist, as the President well knew: it was not a sham fight: it was real; it could not be patted down, or smoothed over, or compromised away. It was not a matter of mere personal good-will and friendly relationship which could

be brushed aside: it was a naked difference of principle. Colonel House never really seemed to see the great stark lines of the conflict or realize at the time what, by these sinuous moves, the "old order" was trying to accomplish. He never intended for a moment to be disloyal to the President; thought he was serving the cause of a speedy peace; sent the President long cablegrams as to what was going on at Paris. But the real effect of his action here, as later in the Conference, was to confuse everything, and in action in this case at least to serve exactly the contrary purpose from the one the President had in view. This judgment is based not alone upon the writer's own conclusions growing out of personal contact at Paris with both men, but upon careful survey of the entire record of the Peace Conference.

It was the dispatches from Colonel House that gave the President the first inkling of the course of affairs at Paris—and no doubt sharpened the challenge in his great speech of March 4, at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, just before sailing again for France, in which he asserted that the Covenant must be knit into the Treaty:

When that treaty comes back, gentlemen on this side will find the covenant not only in it, but so many threads of the Treaty tied to the covenant, that you cannot dissect the covenant from the Treaty without destroying the whole vital structure.

Colonel House met the President when he arrived at Brest and rode up to Paris with him. From this time onward there began to grow up a coldness between the two men to which I shall refer again, for it had an important and unfortunate bearing upon the Peace Conference. This coldness was not due to trivial personal causes or to little, mean jealousies, as popularly reported, although it had indeed personal and trivial aspects, but was based upon far deeper failures in understanding and action.

When all is said, the course of the Council during that crucial month was more stupid than designing. It was tremendously human. Wilson, the leader and prophet, who was demanding such discipline and self-sacrifice, had gone away; they set up a golden calf. They slipped back into courses and methods they understood; they took what seemed the easy way to get what they wanted. Of all the men there, Clemenceau, with his extraordinary clearness of intelligence, was the only one who understood exactly what was going on, as he was the first (as will be shown) to call a halt when he saw that the plan would not work. Such courses as these at Paris were rarely, I believe, due so much to evil design as to sheer want of vision, moral ardour, farsightedness. The men there had their eyes on some immediate selfish purpose which obliterated everything else. They made decisions piecemeal without standing off to observe the total effect of their work. Observers on the outside, however, scanned the news with concern or with glee, according to their convictions. Foes of the League were doubtless too quick to jump to the conclusion they desired—that the League was done for, cut out of the Treaty, and left to perish of inanition. But there was a real kernel of truth in their predictions. These were repeated eagerly, reached the United States, and inspired Tumulty to cable in alarm (March 14) warning the President on his return to Paris of what was being cooked up against him.

Almost the first well-informed man the writer talked with after landing again on French soil said, with a smile:

“Well, your league is dead.”

And that was, indeed, the conviction of the French Press. At least the League was sidetracked—put off until the real settlements could be made. So Pichon was quite frankly saying; so even Lord Robert Cecil, a

true friend of the League, was admitting; so the London *Times* was assuming, arguing that the peace as now planned was in reality only a kind of enlarged armistice. There was even talk of the future congress—after the present Peace Conference—which was to discuss and organize the League.

There does not seem to have been any intention of pushing the new plan to completion before the President's return, but only to commit the Conference with a *fait accompli* and so raise the expectations of the people for speedy settlements, that the President would be unable to stem the tide. A complete settlement would not have been possible even if, as urged in the beginning, all the committee reports had been in by March 8. Foch, with his own plans in mind, tried to force the Council to more haste on March 3, but without avail. For there were fundamental reasons why the scheme, sharp as it was, was doomed from the beginning. While they all wanted a quick peace on the "old order," yet, when it got down to details, all sorts of controversies began to crop up. British and French could not in the least agree upon the military terms, especially the disposition of the captured German Navy. The British and Japanese differed over the distributions of former German cables: Italians and Jugoslavs were at swords' points. Wilson never said a truer or wiser thing than in his speech at Manchester (December 30, 1918):

Interest does not bind men together; interest separates men. . . . There is only one thing that can bind people together, and that is common devotion to right.

Thus with the strongest intent in the world to unite to wreck the whole Wilson scheme, they found themselves absurdly unable to agree. Everyone suddenly

began to be suspicious of Foch and his wild plans. Lloyd George quarrelled with Clemenceau, and the Italians were beginning to object more than ever to a quick peace with Germany which left Austrian problems in abeyance. They all began to grope around for some "principle of settlement." Rejecting Wilson's principle, they had, perforce, in order to overcome these swiftly and bitterly developing jealousies and rivalries, to have some other principle—and there was none. They even began to refer again to the League of Nations. Finally Clemenceau who had come back into the Council, looking pale but still vigorous, declared that settlements must be deferred until both Wilson and Lloyd George (Lloyd George having again gone home) had returned.

The President's information about the progress of events during his absence was fragmentary, but it was speedily completed upon his return—on the 14th of March. The Council had scheduled a meeting on the 15th to consider the now complete (but unaccepted) military terms. Wilson, refusing to be rushed into decisions, asked for a postponement and began a careful study of the complicated draft of those terms. We have that draft now among his documents with his own significant and vital notations on the margin. One of the chief things indicated was his determination to destroy the whole scheme for a permanent military (and even, in part, economic) control of Germany after the peace by allied military commissions. He did not appear in the Council until Monday, the 17th.

But in the meantime he had acted—with stunning audacity and directness. Saturday morning, March 15, about 11 o'clock, he called the writer on the telephone, through a secret circuit which ran directly from his study in the Place des États Unis to the Hotel Crillon. He

asked me to deny the report, now everywhere current in Europe—and to some extent in America—that there would be a separate preliminary peace treaty with the Germans excluding the League of Nations.

“I want you to say that we stand exactly where we stood on January 25 when the Peace Conference adopted the resolution making the Covenant an integral part of the general treaty of peace.”

I therefore drew up a statement, took it up to the President and secured his approval and issued it immediately. It follows:

March 15, 1919.

The President said to-day that the decision made at the Peace Conference at its plenary session, January 25, 1919, to the effect that the establishment of a League of Nations should be made an integral part of the Treaty of Peace, is of final force and that there is no basis whatever for the reports that a change in this decision was contemplated.

The resolution on the League of Nations, adopted January 25, 1919, at the plenary session of the Peace Conference, was as follows:

1. It is essential to the maintenance of the world settlement, which the associated nations are now met to establish, that a League of Nations be created to promote international coöperation, to insure the fulfillment of accepted international obligations, and to provide safeguards against war.

2. This League should be treated as an integral part of the general Treaty of Peace, and should be open to every civilized nation which can be relied upon to promote its objects.

3. The members of the League should periodically meet in international conference, and should have a permanent organization and secretariat to carry on the business of the League in the intervals between the conferences.

This bold pronouncement fell like a veritable bombshell in Paris. It overturned in one swift stroke the most important action of the Conference during the

President's absence. The obscure tendencies, the "dark forces" which had been at work for the past month, were brought up with a jerk.

The President did not go out of his way to criticize what had been done, or to attack any one: he merely announced his purpose. It was an extraordinarily able stroke. By definitely recalling the previous action of the Conference, which had not been rescinded, he was in an utterly impregnable position. By this action he centred interest again upon the League of Nations. As to whether the treaty they were now making was called "preliminary" or "final" he did not in the least care, if he secured the reality which he was seeking: that the Covenant be made the basis of any "general" treaty of peace which contained territorial, economic, colonial, and other settlements.

Bitter and fierce attacks upon the President immediately developed in both French and British newspapers, to which he made no reply. His pronouncement apparently destroyed the popular expectations of an early peace, which not only rested upon a real passion of weariness, a real and deep desire to get the armies demobilized and the wheels of industry started again, but an expectation fostered by certain reactionary newspapers in France and England. The policy of these papers was: Don't bother about new principles or ideals; settle the war quickly; form a new military alliance among the Allies, including America, divide up the spoils among the victors, excepting America, and get back home.

The *Daily Express* of London, for example, called it a "pyrrhic victory," said it was a "hold-up," and demanded that the British Government refuse to support the President. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, gave an interview sharply critical of the President, which was hastily suppressed.

These attacks were the forerunners of the tremendous struggle which now followed swiftly. The net results of the bold counter-stroke of March 15 were mixed, and did not by any means represent a complete victory for the President. He had been absent from the battle-field and could not recover all the lost ground. If nothing more was heard of a general peace without the League, neither was anything more heard of a military settlement and demobilization preceding the general peace—a condition Wilson desired and thought he had assured before he left Paris. In this matter the French gained their point. No preliminaries of any description were ever signed, and the final treaty was signed with considerable armies still afoot and ready to march into Germany. They were depleted by continued demobilization to an extent displeasing to Foch, but to nothing like the extent contemplated before Wilson's departure in the middle of February. The general terms had therefore to be drawn up in an atmosphere of war, not peace, and showed the effects of it.

But Wilson could still, perhaps, count the greater triumph his. It must be remembered that he had largely discredited the terms of the Treaty in advance and pinned his faith to the League. He was keeping the League pretty much as he wanted it, and he had prevented the French from building up an international military surveillance of Germany outside it. These were solid accomplishments. Above all, he had kept the League closely tied to the Treaty, thus insuring its immediate creation as a corrective to any undesirable features the Treaty might take on. Under the régime of the League he counted on the new order to come into its own and correct past failures and mistakes.

But a great struggle was still ahead of him.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### AMERICAN CRITICISM OF THE COVENANT—WILSON'S PROGRAMME FOR REVISION—BITTER FRENCH OP- POSITION—THE MONROE DOCTRINE AND THE COVENANT—ARTICLE X THE STORM CENTRE

NEVER was a leader more sorely beset on every hand than President Wilson upon his return to Paris in March. A general cannot leave a great battle at its height for a month and find it, when he returns, just where he left it. His bold declaration of the 15th had indeed fallen like a bombshell in the councils of the Quai d'Orsay, and had done much to recover the ground lost during his absence in America; but in reality his difficulties were now far more serious than ever before.

It was not so much the newly determined opposition of the European and Japanese leaders, who had been intriguing against his programme and gathering strength for a new campaign while he was away, that troubled him; it was not even the heartbreaking discovery that his own American delegates had failed to understand or uphold him; it was the feeling that he could not count with certainty upon his support at home.

If the President had left dissatisfaction behind him in Europe, he had also to face opposition, springing from wholly different sources, at home. It was largely political, and even personal; but political opposition, however factious, must have some solid basis in public opinion or emo-

tion. There had been a tremendous reaction in America—a part also of the world “slump in idealism.” We had fought the war; now let us return to the safety of our isolation. Let us get back to business. “America first!”

There had been during the war a vast, more or less vague, benevolent sentiment—a good intent—in favour of a league of nations. It was looked on as a quick cure-all for the ills of the world. Let’s give it to the nations! But behind it lay an abysmal ignorance of real international conditions and problems—a result of our long isolation—and when we began to see how serious the world disease was and what it would cost to cure it in self-sacrifice, in money, and even in danger to ourselves, there developed a kind of panic opposition. We benevolently wanted the League—but we didn’t expect to have to pay anything for it!

Thus the voices of reaction, fear, and partisan opposition raising the traditional slogans, “avoid entangling alliances,” “defend the Monroe Doctrine,” found ready listeners. The President had counted upon a moral hardness of conviction and a clearness of understanding in the country that did not, for lack of basic knowledge, then exist. He had thought the thing through; he knew the problem: he knew what the cost would be; but the country, as a whole, did not. The President himself, later in the year, perceiving this very difficulty, tried in one last desperate effort the “swing-around” of September, 1919, which broke him down, to expound the situation to the people, to explain what he had done and why—but it was even then impossible.

Thus he was torn between two sets of fears. If the French feared that the Covenant which the President was carrying across the Atlantic was too weak for their security, the Americans feared it too strong for theirs!

The trip home had, at best, been a dangerous venture; but it had seemed absolutely necessary. The immediate occasion, of course, was the adjournment of Congress on March 4; but the real reason was to report progress and make a powerful effort to consolidate his support at home. For how could he continue to make a bold fight at Paris for the American programme if he knew that everything he did might be blocked later at Washington?

He felt all along—he had always felt—that his strength was in his hold upon the people of America—and of the world—if he could only get to them and explain. But the men he had actually to deal with, who held over him, as it were, the veto power, were the opposition leaders of the United States Senate.

Here the inelastic American system of treaty making with the divided responsibility for foreign affairs as between the President and the Senate, became a greater handicap, because the crisis was greater than ever before in our history. America has never yet devised a sound or efficient technique of diplomacy. The statement might be broadened by saying that democracy has nowhere yet acquired a satisfactory diplomatic method. The early American Colonies, suspicious, and rightly so, of the secret dealings of the old diplomats, had so hedged about their new system of government with checks and balances—providing that while the President might negotiate treaties, two thirds of the Senate must ratify them—that it has been made impossible for America to speak with a bold and united voice. Nearly every important treaty the country has been called upon to make has become a bone of contention between the Executive and the Senate. It is certain that in the years to come, if we are to go forward in the new paths and stand for a clear-cut world policy, we must devise some method of speaking to

the world promptly and with an undivided voice. Our present system leads to utter weakness, muddle, and delay: it forces both sides to play polities, and instead of meeting the issue squarely to indulge in a vast controversy over the prerogatives of two coördinate branches of the Government. The deadlock between the Executive and the Senate every time we face a really critical foreign problem is intolerable. It not only disgraces us before the nations, but in some future world crisis may ruin us.

The President, of course, clearly saw this difficulty, and relied, in circumventing it, upon keeping public opinion in America so alive, so committed to the principles of the peace he advocated, as to force unity of action.

But the trouble at Washington, as at Paris, was that while the reaction of democracy is sluggish and confused, the President had to act quickly. He did not have time to explain to the people how the Covenant he had brought back answered their vision. It required a knowledge of history, foreign affairs, law, that even the leaders did not have. Doubt—a perfectly natural hesitation—began to appear, and it was in this ready soil of doubt that the leaders of the Senate planted their seeds of opposition. Some of them were honestly doubtful, others were too willing to use popular hesitation to make political capital.

It is easy, of course, to say that there should have been better and freer publicity at Paris and at home. The writer believes that the great failure of the Americans at the Peace Conference was a failure in constructive publicity, but it was a highly complicated failure, and even with the best publicity the development of the public opinion of a nation of 110,000,000 people must have been a slow business.

The long voyages across the Atlantic, during which the

President remained almost wholly alone, gave him time to fight out all these problems in his own mind. He saw the forces that were arraying themselves against him with penetrating clearness, and they only served to harden his determination to make his essential idea prevail. The world seemed sinking into anarchy and chaos; everything seemed more and more to depend upon having a strong, coöperative organization to hold it together and rebuild it, and to have the organization immediately.

The voyages on the comfortable *George Washington* had given the President not only time to think, but a much-needed opportunity to rest under the close care of Dr. Grayson. If it had not been for these respites during the heavy struggle at Paris one doubts whether the President would have been physically able to endure the strain as long as he did. He was, as I have said, much alone, "wrapped in his own spirit"; and yet that picture of aloofness must ever be lightened and modified by glimpses of the President as a simple human being.

I may venture to give a glimpse of this voyage from my notes made at the time:

At Sea, March 13.

I lunched with the President and Mrs. Wilson yesterday in their private cabin. Most interesting talk. In these informal relationships the President and Mrs. Wilson are altogether charming, friendly, simple people. President is full of stories—not of the indigenous, homely sort that Lincoln told, but remembered anecdotes, limericks, puns. He applies them with amazing aptness. Yesterday he told a number of Scotch golfing stories, pleasantly imitating the Scotch burr, as he can also imitate the Negro dialect when he tells a Negro story. We talked of the prohibition amendment, which he signed the other day (with Miss Benham's fountain pen) on the way to Washington. He said, with a humorous turn, that the new law would cause some personal deprivation, but once we became adjusted to it, it

would be of inestimable value. He believed that the masses of the people were behind it upon conviction.

Now that our voyage is concluding I wish I could set down, not so much the facts, but an adequate impression of this voyage. It has been quiet and simple, a small group and friendly. Coming out of strenuous days, controversies, and great meetings, the President has rested. He looked worn and gray when he came aboard. I have never seen him looking wearier than at the Metropolitan speech, but he soon recuperated under Dr. Grayson's care, so that now he looks as well as ever. He shows in these quiet and friendly relationships at his best, in a light in which I wish many Americans who think him a cold, unamiable man could see him. He and Mrs. Wilson are frequently on deck; once they played deck shuffle-board. They came in quite regularly to the moving picture shows and seemed to enjoy them greatly, and they listened to the excellent music of the ship's orchestra. Sometimes after meals or after the evening's entertainment we would find President and Mrs. Wilson at the bottom of the stairs near their cabin and have a good talk, very little of the problems, but talk, once, for example, of Lafayette, again of the French people and their characteristics, again of golf and golfing with many stories and much laughter. Mrs. Wilson is not only the pleasantest of women, but possesses great courage and good sense, and it is plain enough that the President leans heavily upon her. On two or three days the President had various members of the party to luncheon or dinner, starting simply with a quiet grace said in low tones, and the meal itself passing off with the friendly give and take of any American family gathering. After one of these luncheons I heard a member of the party say, "Well I never knew that the President was that kind of a man at all, so human and so simple." The President and Mrs. Wilson have quite won the hearts of the officers and crew of the ship. They have been passengers now for three voyages—twenty-seven days aboard. "It is getting to be a kind of house-boat," said Mrs. Wilson, "almost like a big family." At the closing entertainment in the cabin on Wednesday night, just as we were about to break up, a group of seamen in the back of the hall began to sing, "God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again," continuing through all the verses. Then the whole company, including the President, sang together, "Auld Lang Syne." I wondered among what other people in this world could there develop just such relationships or such a spirit.

If the President had firmly made up his mind regarding the inclusion of the Covenant in the general treaty of peace, he had still the equally vital problem as to what to do in regard to American criticism of the Covenant itself—chiefly the guarantees of Article X. This was truly the “heart of the Covenant” because it affected the crucial element in the whole settlement, which was French security. Without first relieving French fear by a world guarantee there was no hope of speedy limitation of armament or of settlements upon a broad basis of justice and right. The guarantee in the Covenant, designed to accomplish this end, was already regarded as too weak by the French. The President had had a struggle in the first place to get the French, who demanded a strong military alliance, to accept it at all. But it was regarded in America as too strong, as threatening our traditional Monroe Doctrine and involving us in possible “entangling alliances.” The President was astonished and deeply worried by the volume of criticism along these lines that he found in America.

Yet if he sought to satisfy American opposition and solidify the forces behind him by getting the amendments suggested by Taft and others, he would at once have to face French opposition and the charge that the Covenant was being weakened.

On the other hand, if he paid no attention to opposition at home and made no changes in the Covenant, he would lend more fuel to the fire of criticism which charged him with being a dictator, of demanding his own way regardless of the advice of other leaders or of public opinion; and the fight when he finally returned with the Treaty might be ruinous to his whole programme.

What should he do? Either course was beset with danger.

At times there is no doubt that he considered going straight through and making the fight against the Paris opposition on the basis of the Covenant as drawn. He was afraid that if he demanded changes on behalf of America, it would open the floodgates for new demands by the Allies and that he would be forced into concessions that would ruin his whole plan. He felt also that no matter what he did, the opposition in the Senate, eager for partisan advantage, would only advance its ground of criticism—as indeed happened.

“No matter what I do,” he told a friend on the *George Washington*, “they will continue the attack.”

Yet he saw one clear ray of hope. This was the friendly helpfulness of a number of leaders of great prominence in America—like ex-President Taft—who were outside the partisan squabble and were willing in the public interest to advance the whole programme of international co-operation. Taft had spoken with President Wilson to the same great audience at the Metropolitan Opera House on March 4. If he could satisfy these men and at the same time draw closer to him powerful leaders in his own party, like Senator Hitchcock, by consulting with them and using their advice, he might go far to quiet the obstreperous Senate group, win public opinion, and secure the indispensable American support behind him. It would mean a new and terrific struggle with France; but he could stand that if he was sure of America.

Consequently, he decided upon the latter course: revise the Covenant to satisfy American opposition and find some other way to make up to France for the weakening of the guarantee. No sooner had he returned than such a method was unexpectedly suggested to him. It had already been worked out by the British. It was to be an Anglo-American pact to come to the support of France

in case of an attack. It had many disadvantages from the President's point of view; he knew it would be called a "special alliance," and it promised to be difficult to steer through the Senate, yet it was a way of peaceful coöperation and not peace by military force, and it was only of temporary duration to bridge the gap between war and the firm functioning of the League of Nations; and, finally, if he had to weaken the guarantee in the Covenant to satisfy American opposition it would perhaps make up to France what she had lost.

Having made up his mind which of the dangerous courses to adopt, the President, with characteristic singleness of purpose, not only drove it through to the end, but did it handsomely, by accepting Taft's suggestions as the basis of his principal changes.

One week after his return, on March 22, the League of Nations Commission met to begin the revision. Five night sessions were held—exhausting night sessions, two of them continuing beyond midnight—with the first physical breakdown of the President intervening—and on April 11 the revised Covenant was finally adopted. It was just as the President had feared. The attempt to revise the instrument on the part of the Americans opened the floodgates of all the old controversies, newly embittered by delay. For the President's action in insisting, when he returned to Paris, upon the original plan to make the Covenant an "integral part of the Treaty" drove the French to make a harder effort than ever before to get the kind of a covenant they wanted. If they had to have a league of nations they were determined that it must be one that would serve their own interests. But the President drove his programme through—at the same time beginning the new struggle of the "Dark Period" with the other leaders of the "Big Four," but

now with new handicaps and a feeling of the uncertainty of his support from home.

When the President returned to Paris he had, of course, a pretty complete idea of the amendments to the Covenant that were most urgently needed to satisfy the criticism of his own countrymen. These are outlined, for example, in a letter from the friendly and loyal Senator Hitchcock, dated March 4.<sup>1</sup>

Three principal changes and a fourth of lesser importance were demanded, and all of them, but especially the first two, either struck at and weakened the essential element of the guarantees or else tended to limit the full and hearty participation of powerful America in the affairs of the League. These changes were:

1. Specific recognition of the Monroe Doctrine.
2. Provision for withdrawal of America from the League.
3. Specific exclusion of domestic questions (tariffs, immigration, etc.) from the field of disputes open to international jurisdiction.
4. Stipulation that the acceptance of mandates was optional with the designated mandatory. This last was to enable America to refuse to take a mandate if she wished to avoid that responsibility.

These changes had not only been outlined in the letter of Senator Hitchcock which the President had with him on his voyage back to France, but in cablegrams from former President Taft (March 18 and 21), and President Lowell of Harvard University (March 21), who had been ardent supporters of the League to Enforce Peace, and from Elihu Root.

The Taft cablegram of March 18, which became the

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 10, for text of letter of Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska.

basis of the President's amendment regarding the Monroe Doctrine, is so important that it is reproduced here in full:

The White House,  
Washington, March 18, 1919.

President Wilson, Paris:

Following from William H. Taft:

"If you bring back the treaty with the League of Nations in it make more specific reservations of the Monroe Doctrine, fix a term for the duration of the League, and the limit of armament, require expressly unanimity of action of Executive Council and body of Delegates, and add to Article 15 a provision that where the Executive Council of the Body of Delegates finds the difference to grow out of an exclusively domestic policy, it shall recommend no settlement, the ground will be completely cut from under the opponents of the League in the Senate. Addition to Article 15 will answer objection as to Japanese immigration, as well as tariffs under Article 21. Reservation of the Monroe Doctrine might be as follows:

"Any American State or States may protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of the Government whose territory it is, whether a member of the League or not, and may, in the interests of the American peace, object to and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any power outside the Western Hemisphere.

"Monroe Doctrine reservation alone would probably carry the treaty, but others would make it certain,

(Signed)

"WILLIAM H. TAFT."

TUMULTY.

The pressure to which the President was subjected—as well as the promise he had from these influential Republican sources that if he got the amendments "treaty will be promptly ratified"—will be indicated by a later cablegram as follows:

The White House,  
Washington, April 18, 1919.

President Wilson, Paris:

Following is sent at the request of Mr. Taft:

"Friends of the covenant are seriously alarmed over report that no amendment will be made more specifically safeguarding Monroe

Doctrine. At full meeting of Executive Committee of League to Enforce Peace, with thirty members from eighteen States present, unanimous opinion that without such amendment Republican Senators will certainly defeat ratification of treaty, because public opinion will sustain them. With such amendment, treaty will be promptly ratified."

(Signed)

"WILLIAM H. TAFT.

"A. LAWRENCE LOWELL."

TUMULTY.

It will be seen from this how crucially important a matter the Monroe Doctrine was considered as affecting American opinion. It had also been of the utmost importance in the President's thinking from the very beginning, and he not only did not wish to destroy its essential principle, but considered that he was extending and making it more powerful. For this reason he probably underestimated the pothet at home, and failed to evaluate properly the demand for the specific mention of the Doctrine in the Covenant.

It is well known, of course, that practically all of Wilson's programme for world peace and reconstruction was based upon traditional American policies and experience broadened to fit world conditions. He considered the Monroe Doctrine as one of the most vital of these fundamental American policies; and the whole development of his programme for a "new order" may, indeed, be viewed as a generalization of the Monroe Doctrine in its positive aspect.

It must be borne in mind that there are two complementary propositions in the Monroe Doctrine: the first, positive, directed against European intervention in the American continents; the second, negative, against American intervention in Europe.

The latter proposition is more commonly associated

with Washington's Farewell Address, "avoid entangling alliances," but it is contained also in Monroe's Message, and any unqualified assertion or repudiation of the Monroe Doctrine involves it. These two principles have formed for a century the bulwark of American isolation. Our sense of national safety has rested upon our isolation. Therefore, any proposal to change the Monroe Doctrine in any way, even to enlarge its application, naturally awakened American fears and anxieties.

The essential positive principle of the Monroe Doctrine, under which the United States assumed to protect the weaker South and Central American republics—the principle of the responsibility of the strong for the safety and welfare of the weak—had taken a powerful hold upon the President. It was to him a fundamental moral principle. It was the only principle that would save great and powerful nations from the snares and pits of imperialism.

He therefore wished to extend and emphasize this principle. He had been a strong advocate of the Pan-American Union projected in 1916 for drawing all the states of the Western Hemisphere into closer relationships. He had suggested as a basis of this union a mutual guarantee of "territorial integrity and political independence" (and these words became afterward the heart of Article X). Round this guarantee was to be built up a permanent organization for the peaceable conduct of all the affairs of North and South America.

What more natural than to extend this central idea of the Monroe Doctrine, with the mutual guarantees, to the proposed world league? The President told the Senate, January 22, 1917:

I am proposing, as it were, that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world.

Clearly enough this was not "scrapping the Monroe Doctrine," as his enemies charged, but giving it a broader development. And if all nations came into one league, with mutual guarantees of peace and protection, the negative proposition of the Monroe Doctrine, providing against our intervention in European affairs, would entirely lose its importance. We would step out of our isolation, and take our place in world affairs under the ægis of our own great international principle set forth in the Monroe Doctrine.

"We still read Washington's immortal warning against 'entangling alliances' with full comprehension and an answering purpose," he said in his address of September 27, 1918. "But only special and limited alliances entangle and we . . . hope for a general alliance which will avoid entanglements."

Elsewhere he referred to the League as a "disentangling alliance."

The Monroe Doctrine was a statement of methods, not of ends, and if the ends were as well served, and in larger measure, by a league of nations, surely one could regard its new application as an interpretation rather than a contradiction of these classical American principles.

President Wilson thus saw no essential conflict between the guarantees of Article X and the essential purpose of the Monroe Doctrine. He told friends on the *George Washington* that specific mention of the Monroe Doctrine was "mere repetition."

Taft understood this situation exactly. In a cablegram of March 16, through Secretary Tumulty, are these significant words:

He [Taft] said that these suggestions [for amendments to the covenant] do not look to the change of the structure of the League,

CODE.

The President.

March 18; 12 P.M. "If you bring back the treaty with the League of Nations in it, make more specific reservation of the Monroe Doctrine, fix a term for duration of the League, and the limit of armament, require expressly unanimity of action in the Executive Council and Body of Delegates, and add to Article 15 a provision that where the Executive Council of the Body of Delegates finds the difference to grow out of an exclusively domestic policy, it shall recommend no settlement, the ground will be completely cut from under the opponents of the League in the Senate. Addition to Article 15 will answer objection as to Japanese immigration, as well as tariffs under Article 21.

Reservation of the Monroe Doctrine might be as follows: "Any American state or states <sup>to</sup> ~~may~~ protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of the government whose territory <sup>therein</sup> is ~~is~~ whether a member of the League or not, <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ may, in the interest of American peace, <sup>to</sup> ~~object to~~ and prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any power outside the Western hemisphere."

"Monroe Doctrine reservation alone would probably carry the treaty, but others would make it certain. William H. Taft.

Tumulty.

Facsimile of ex-President Taft's original cabled suggestions for revision of the Covenant with President Wilson's notes in his own handwriting

the plan of its action or its real character, but simply to removing objections in minds of conscientious Americans, who are anxious for a league of nations, whose fears have been roused by suggested constructions of the League which its language does not justify and whose fears could be removed without any considerable change of language.

While Wilson thus felt, just as Taft did, that the language of the Covenant did not justify American fears, and that an effort to revise the Treaty in order to mention the Monroe Doctrine specifically would lead to great difficulties and a weakening of the American position at Paris (as it did), yet he was constrained by political necessity to go forward.

Wilson drew up his three proposed amendments (about March 22) covering the three principal points at issue:—(1) Monroe Doctrine, (2) withdrawal from League, (3) domestic questions—on a single sheet of paper, using his own typewriter.

The first was an addition to Article X, as follows:

Nothing in this covenant shall be deemed to affect or deny the right of any American State or States to protect the integrity of American territory and the independence of any American Government whose territory is threatened, whether a member of the League or not, or in the interest of American peace, to object to or prevent the further transfer of American territory or sovereignty to any power outside the Western Hemisphere.

The history of this amendment is most significant. The President took the copy of the cablegram from Mr. Taft, printed above, and made pencil changes upon it, bringing it to the form of the typewritten text referred to.<sup>1</sup>

The second amendment—to Article XV—reserving domestic questions from the jurisdiction of the League is taken from a second Taft cable, forwarded March 21. The third amendment on the list, providing for possible withdrawal from the League, had a less definite origin. Wilson had two proposals before him, differing in temporal elements. Taft's proposal of the 21st would permit withdrawal after 1929 on two years' notice. Another

<sup>1</sup>See *fascimile*, p. 828.

Nothing in this Covenant shall be deemed to affect any international engagement or understanding for securing the peace of the world such as treaties of arbitration and the Monroe Doctrine.

Balfour & Cecil have worked this out as a feasible article to cover the point you have in mind - If you approve please let me know

Original memorandum showing counter-proposal of British for amendment regarding Monroe Doctrine, with Colonel House's memorandum

proposal from President Lowell of Harvard University was for withdrawal after ten years, upon two months' notice. The ten-year period was retained, as common to both, and the time of notice set at one year. The language was mainly that of Lowell's cable.

This draft of the amendments was submitted through Colonel House to the British for consideration before going to the Commission. They agreed readily enough to the last two proposals, but objected to that on the Monroe Doctrine. They even made a counter-proposal naming the doctrine, but not defining it, and grouping it with other engagements and understandings "such as treaties, of arbitration."<sup>1</sup>

Just why the British preferred this form to the other is not easy to discern. It is hard to see anything very objectionable from their point of view in the American proposal; yet they preferred to have the doctrine undefined. When the French pressed for definition, on April 10, Cecil replied: "It was well to leave it undefined, . . . for any attempt at definition might extend or limit its application."<sup>2</sup> The most obvious similar "understanding" (the adjective "regional" was not in the original British proposal), of which recognition was implicitly included, would be the Anglo-Japanese alliance, as Koo of China quickly realized. It was probably with the idea of protecting certain of their own similar understandings that the British thus broadened the wording of the amendment.

The second and third American amendment suggested by the President, as well as a fourth deriving from American sources, to make optional the acceptance by a nation of a colonial mandate, were adopted without great dis-

<sup>1</sup>See facsimile, p. 330.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 94.

cussion. The centre of attack was upon the Monroe Doctrine amendment, which was introduced by the President on April 10 and occupied most of the time of the last two sessions—the most extended sessions in the entire conference—of the League of Nations Commission. The President made a great speech, unreported, but acknowledged by all who heard it to be one of his greatest efforts at the Peace Conference, in which, taking the Monroe Doctrine as a text, he set forth his vision of the new order, the need of a new attitude of mind, and the part America must play in future world relationships. It was not the letter of the instrument they were making that so much counted, he said, as the spirit of good-will and coöperation with which the great nations approached these new relationships. They must satisfy the people of the world, the people of America and the people of France, and, having accepted the instrumentality now in their hands, go forward with world settlements upon that new basis of justice and permanent peace.

But the President found himself again face to face with the formidable obstacle of French fear, French demands for security. The entire struggle opened anew. France had originally accepted the guarantee in Article X with reluctance, thinking it too weak; and she regarded the President's amendments as making it still weaker, less definite and clear, and both the French delegates, Bourgeois and Larnaude, began an obstinate attack. It was clearly recognized by everyone that this controversy over guarantees was vital. Article X was truly, as the President said later, the "heart of the Covenant." Lord Robert Cecil told the Commission that the anxiety of the French delegates was caused by the fact that the amendment had been introduced as an addition to Article X, "which was of the greatest importance to France."

"They feared," he said, "that the amendment might limit the protection which was afforded by Article 10."<sup>1</sup>

The President argued that the adoption of the amendment was only stating definitely in the Covenant that "which was already implied." This had been Taft's argument in his cablegram (through Tumulty) of March 16. Lord Robert Cecil also now supported him in this contention:

The amendment had been inserted in order to quiet doubts, and to calm misunderstandings [in America]. It did not make the substance of the Doctrine more or less valid. . . . There was nothing in the Monroe Doctrine which conflicted with the Covenant, and therefore nothing in the Covenant which interfered with international understandings like the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>2</sup>

But the very mention of the Monroe Doctrine raised all manner of questions and doubts. The French thought that "if it was not inconsistent with the terms of the Covenant, it was unnecessary to refer to it." They also asked immediately to "have a clear definition of the Monroe Doctrine. . . . Did President Wilson's amendment consecrate or change this policy?"

At once the two aspects of the Monroe Doctrine came under discussion. What effect would the amendment have in emphasizing the positive side of the Monroe Doctrine: that of preventing European Governments from meddling in America? This aspect of the matter was what at once struck Mr. Reis, the delegate from Brazil. On the other hand, what effect would it have in emphasizing the negative aspect of the doctrine: that America was not to entangle herself in European affairs? This was what profoundly concerned the French, for they

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 94.

wanted America bound, without doubt or question, under the Covenant to come to their assistance if attacked.

While the President believed that the Covenant superseded the Monroe Doctrine by widening its application, he yet had to meet these swift-gathering doubts and questions.

Consider first the positive aspect of the Doctrine, which Wilson met with a clear exposition of his whole conception of the Covenant:

Mr. REIS asked whether the Monroe Doctrine would prevent League action in American affairs.

President WILSON replied in the negative. The Covenant provided that members of the League should mutually defend one another in respect of their political and territorial integrity. The Covenant was therefore the highest possible tribute to the Monroe Doctrine. It adopted the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, as a world doctrine. . . . His colleagues in America had asked him whether the Covenant would destroy the Monroe Doctrine. He had replied that the Covenant was nothing but a confirmation and extension of the doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

President Wilson also agreed to the statement of Cecil, on April 11.

Lord ROBERT CECIL believed that the Monroe Doctrine would in nowise prevent the forces of an European State from going to America in order to defend the rights of the oppressed. The sole object of the Monroe Doctrine was to prevent any European Power from acquiring any influence, territory or political supremacy on the American continent.

The President in taking this position, of course, considered that the Covenant would completely safeguard the true purpose of the Monroe Doctrine by its broader and stronger sanctions; it involved only a change in method, not a change in principle. Still, the very mention

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 94.

of the Monroe Doctrine specifically, as in the proposed amendment, tended to raise questions and doubts such as Mr. Reis suggested; tended to cloud and befog the real attitude of America in case the problem of the intervention of the League in American affairs should, in future, arise.

But the Europeans, especially the French, were not interested in the positive aspect of the Doctrine. They did not want to interfere in America; what concerned them, and concerned them deeply, was the other aspect of the Doctrine. This anxiety was thus expressed:

Mr. LARNAUDE thought that it would certainly be very unfortunate if the Monroe Doctrine should be interpreted to mean that the United States could not participate in any settlement of European affairs decided by the League. . . .

President WILSON again assured Mr. Larnaude that if the United States signed this document they would be solemnly obliged to render aid in European affairs, when the territorial integrity of any European State was threatened by external aggression.<sup>1</sup>

This did not mean, of course, that we were obliged to render aid without a vote of Congress in each case.

Larnaude would not let sleeping dogs lie. He demanded that the United States be "legally bound" beyond possibility of misunderstanding.

Cecil attempted to allay the fear of the French "that the amendment might limit the protection which was afforded by Article X" by placing it under Article XX, concerned with treaties and obligations in general. (It was finally made a separate article—XXI.)

Larnaude then insisted on a definition which would make it clear that non-intervention was not included. "He wished to have an obligation imposed on America to take part in European affairs."

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 95.

When Wilson tried to shame him by asking if he doubted America's readiness to meet any threat to Europe's liberty, he made an answer which disclosed, as in a flash, what lay deep behind the French demands, the consciousness of the future economic struggle of nations and the desire to be assured also of the safety of France in this field—a very ugly and thorny question.

Future wars [said Larnaude] might not . . . be wars of liberation. They might be economic in origin. The question was, therefore, whether the United States would come to the help of France should she be engaged in a struggle with a country which happened to be quite as liberal as herself.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson did not ask Larnaude to interpret this utterance. He did ask why France so distrusted the United States and "did she wish to stop her signing the Covenant?"

This question carried the day on April 10. But the French never at Paris gave over a contention; and on the next day—the last session of the League of Nations Commission—Larnaude was back with an amendment to the amendment, qualifying "understandings" by the clause "in so far as they do not in any way prevent the signatory States from executing their obligations under this Covenant."

President Wilson could only try again to reassure the French; he "remarked that there was no fear in America that the Monroe Doctrine was contrary to the obligations of the Covenant. There was, however, a fear that the Covenant might to some extent invalidate the Monroe Doctrine. If there were anything in the Doctrine inconsistent with the Covenant, the Covenant would take precedence over the Monroe Doctrine, not only because

<sup>1</sup> Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 96.

it was subsequent to it, but because it constituted a body of definite international engagements."

The discussion at this point came perilously near to an open break. The French persisted in their argument though it was past midnight. They considered, in spite of all assurances, that the American amendment did weaken the guarantees of Article X. But Wilson had by this time reached a personal understanding with Clemenceau on the general question of the French claims in which sufficient concessions were made to France in other matters for Clemenceau to be willing to let the Covenant go through as the Americans wanted it.<sup>1</sup> Wilson felt his position secure enough to close the debate at last by abruptly declaring the French amendment not adopted.

The American amendments were thus accepted, but the situation that the President now had to face was rendered far more difficult. The French, sharply dissatisfied with the Covenant, pinned their faith more than ever to guarantees of security outside the League. On the other hand, the amendments which the President had sponsored in the hope of quieting American opposition failed in the end to serve even that purpose. It was indeed an impossible situation he had to face: if he satisfied the American opposition he alarmed France; if he satisfied France he goaded American opposition.

If Wilson had stood to the end on his original concept of the Covenant—that the negative aspect of the Monroe Doctrine is obsolete, and that the positive aspect is merged in the vaster and stronger project of a world guarantee—he could not have gone down harder in America than he did, but he would have gone down on a clearer issue, the issue upon which, so far as America

<sup>1</sup>See Chapter XXVIII.

is concerned, the battle for a new world order must ultimately be fought.

Besides the objections against both aspects of the Monroe Doctrine itself there was a third objection raised against its inclusion in a whole class of "regional understandings," of all of which the validity was admitted.

Wellington Koo of China quickly perceived what this word "understandings" might imply as regards Chinese interests. He feared that a kind of Monroe Doctrine might be advanced by the Japanese as applying to the continent of Asia. "It appeared to him to be too broad. It would cover all kinds of undertakings, good, bad, and indifferent."<sup>1</sup> He would have the Doctrine simply recognized by itself, but his repeated objections were overridden. He made a clever point the second day of this debate, however, which in part, at least, served his purpose, when he secured the insertion of the words "or understandings," in the sentence of Article XX, providing for the abrogation of all obligations inconsistent with the League.

Where does this leave the Monroe Doctrine? Well, it is not properly an "understanding," after all, but a declaration of policy; and how far it is lived up to depends upon us. And it is inconsistent with the League or not as we interpret it. In short, the real future struggle for a new world order lies in the soul of America—in America's decisions as to what her own rights, duties, and responsibilities as the most powerful world State are to be. Shall a narrow and selfish American doctrine guaranteeing American isolation and security be kept uppermost? Or shall America adopt the wider world order demanded by Wilson, in which, if America is asked to assume new responsibilities, she also performs a new service, under-

<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, p. 94.

takes a new leadership and thereby acquires greater rights than she has ever known before? If the vision set forth by Wilson at Paris—the vision of a great State serving the world—was tarnished in the dirt and heat of the conflict of Paris, it is imperishable; and the door to its realization—whatever compromises Wilson was forced to accept—yet remains open; and it is Wilson, who, after all, kept it open.

At the plenary session of April 28 the final Covenant was formally and unanimously adopted and then became an “integral part of the general treaty of peace,” just as the President had planned.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 20, for final text of the Covenant of the League as it appears in the Treaty.



**PART IV**

**STRUGGLE FOR LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS**



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE AMERICAN PROGRAMME FOR LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS—LLOYD GEORGE'S RESOLUTIONS—WILSON DEMANDS GENERAL DISARMAMENT, NOT MERELY THE DISARMAMENT OF GERMANY

AFULL disclosure of exactly what was said and done at Paris, taken from private documents and minutes of secret meetings, will furnish an incomparably valuable basis of experience for present and future discussions of the problems of disarmament. France stands for the same things that she stood for at Paris: for she is France; and her position is inexorably dictated by her national interests and fears. So it is with the British Empire and Japan and Italy. So it is with America. So it is with any leaders, whether they be the same who were at Paris or others who may appear to represent national interests and aspirations. Every essential problem connected with military power and military armament—the policy of conscription, size of armies and navies, and the principles of limitation, problems of communication and blockade, the use of the new instrumentalities of war, such as airplanes, wireless telegraph, poison gases, submarines—was fully discussed at Paris. We know definitely not only what each leader of the Great Five said, but what, under pressure, he did, which is more important. The record reveals, as nothing else could, the difficulties, the dangers, the possibilities and impossibilities of meeting this problem.

If the great war represented a clash of the greatest material forces of the age, the Peace Conference which followed it represented an equally vital clash of its greatest ideas.

And no single idea moved forward into the battle line at Paris had harder fighting, resisted sterner attacks, surmounted more entanglements, suffered greater losses, and yet somehow held its position, than the idea of world reduction in military armaments.

It was one of the ideas or principles which the Americans brought with them to Paris. It had been clearly set forth by the American leader, President Wilson, as one of the formal bases of the coming peace. It was the Fourth Point of the Fourteen; and at the Armistice it had been "accepted in principle," as the diplomats say, by all the belligerent nations—friends and enemies alike. All that it seemed necessary now to do was to move forward and occupy the new position. No one at the time realized the treacherous ground that had yet to be fought over!

In itself the idea of preventing men from fighting by removing the implements of war is as ancient, probably, as the Stone Age. It had been the vision of many a prophet—Isaiah was for beating swords into ploughshares—and the programme of many a statesman. Before the great war British leaders sought an agreement with Germany for "a naval holiday." It was one of the ideals of the Hague Peace Conference—to be dismissed with pious resolutions.

When President Wilson began to think about the peace as the vital concern of America, he saw clearly that the limitation of armaments must form one of the pillars upon which a just settlement was to rest. We did not enter the war until April, 1917, but three months before we find the

President, in an address (to the United States Senate, January 22, 1917), which I heard a French editor call "Wilson's greatest utterance," laying down this idea as one of the "essential principles of an enduring peace." Here are his words:

The question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies and of all programmes of military preparation. . . . There can be no sense of safety and equality among the nations if great preponderating armaments are henceforth to continue here and there to be built up and maintained. The statesmen of the world must plan for peace and nations must adjust and accommodate their policy to it as they have planned for war and made ready for pitiless conquest and rivalry. The question of armaments, whether on land or sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind.

A year later, in January, 1918, when, after much thought and discussion, he came finally to outline his complete programme for the coming settlement, he set forth the principle, reduced to its naked elements, as Point Four of the Fourteen:

Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

Here is the plank in the platform upon which rested all the controversy at Paris. It is important, therefore, to understand just what it means.

Most of the advocates of disarmament in the past have cautiously avoided trying to set up a standard of armament for the world; they have contented themselves with proposals to cut away a certain number of battleships and the outlawing of certain new weapons or devices. To stout bowmen and swordsmen of a few centuries ago gunpowder was a violation of the laws of war. But in

Point Four President Wilson boldly grapples with the two fundamental problems of armament:

First, what shall be the true function and standard of national armament? Second, how shall the peace and security of nations be assured without "great preponderating armaments"?

There are thus two main ideas expressed in Point Four:

(1) That armaments "will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety." Domestic safety was to be the standard, and "domestic" was the very first word pounced upon by the critics at Paris, who considered that it meant the reduction of the armies and navies of the future to a position of mere national or international police. It set them a-shiver, for it seemed a blow at their safety; and, indeed, without the other principle set forth in Point Four, it was a chimera. This principle was:

(2) "Adequate guarantees given and taken" that this standard will be maintained throughout the world. In short, there must be a new and adequate coöperation among the nations, so strong as to obviate the necessity of armaments for any other purposes than to insure domestic or international safety. The whole idea of a league of nations with mutual guarantees is implicit in this phrase. For if there is a league of nations strong enough to guarantee international peace, what need is there of national armaments for any other purpose than to preserve domestic safety?

President Wilson drew the inspiration for Point Four, as he drew most of his inspirations, from the principles and practices of America. Here were forty-eight States in a Union. No State needed to maintain more than a militia to preserve domestic order, for there was a union of all of them to guarantee the safety of each. He was applying the American idea to the world.

He had already said in his second inaugural address, just before America entered the war (March 5, 1917):

We shall be the more American if we but remain true to the principles in which we have been bred. . . . We have known and boasted all along that they were the principles of a liberated mankind. These, therefore, are the things we shall stand for, whether in war or in peace. . . .

That national armaments should be limited to the necessities of national order and domestic safety.

As has been described, in Chapter XIII, the President's idea of limitation of armament was included from the first in the projects for a covenant of the League of Nations. Wilson had taken over and elaborated the article drawn by Colonel House, changing the word "safety," employed by the latter, back to the "domestic safety" of Point Four and providing for the use of armed forces for "the enforcement by common action of international obligations." He had expanded the article still further by clauses regarding conscription and scales of equipment derived from Smuts. The text which finally emerged as Article IV of the draft which the President had printed and distributed, early in January, read as follows:

The Contracting Powers recognize the principle that the establishment and maintenance of peace will require the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations; and the delegates are directed to formulate at once plans by which such a reduction may be brought about. The plan so formulated shall be binding when, and only when, unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this Covenant.

As the basis for such a reduction of armaments, all the Powers subscribing to the Treaty of Peace of which this Covenant constitutes a part hereby agree to abolish conscription and all other forms of compulsory military service, and also agree that their future forces of defense and of international action shall consist of militia

or volunteers, whose numbers and methods of training shall be fixed, after expert inquiry, by the agreements with regard to the reduction of armaments referred to in the last preceding paragraph.

The Body of Delegates shall also determine for the consideration and action of the several governments what direct military equipment and armament is fair and reasonable in proportion to the scale of forces laid down in the programme of disarmament; and these limits, when adopted, shall not be exceeded without the permission of the Body of Delegates.

The Contracting Powers further agree that munitions and implements of war shall not be manufactured by private enterprise or for private profit, and that there shall be full and frank publicity as to all national armaments and military or naval programmes.

Since this was the concrete American programme for limitation of armaments proposed at Paris, and since the discussions centred around it during the long sessions both of the Councils of Ten and of Four and the Commission on the League of Nations, it is most important to know exactly what were the concrete ideas here advanced. They were six in number:

1. Armaments were to be used for only two purposes: first, to preserve "domestic safety" within the nations and, second, to meet the requirement of maintaining international order by force if any member of the family of nations refused to respect the general laws and decisions.

2. Nothing definite could be accomplished immediately; only principles could be laid down to be worked out later by another body (an organ of the League) after the settlement of the peace.

3. Disarmament must entail the complete abolition of compulsory military service (a deep-rooted Anglo-Saxon aversion).

4. Manufacture of munitions by private enterprise or for private profit must be abolished.

5. Publicity would take care of any possible departure from the schedules of armament finally agreed upon.

6. There must be unanimous agreement by the "Governments signatory to this Covenant."

It is a remarkable fact, which I shall develop later, that the President's "impractical ideal" of limitation of armament as here set forth was almost literally applied by the Peace Commissioners at Paris to Germany. Her armament was reduced strictly to the standard of "domestic safety," with the accompanying implication that under the Treaty she would be protected by "adequate guarantees" from foreign aggression. But when the allied nations tried to apply the same principles to themselves we shall see what happened! They treated their enemy, so far as burdensome and costly armaments were concerned, better than they treated themselves.

A strong supporter of the President in his original proposal was the military member of the American Commission, General Tasker H. Bliss. While a member of the Supreme War Council, before the Armistice, he had argued for the disarmament of Germany to the limit of "such forces as were needed for the maintenance of order," but he couched this proposal for stern reduction—just as the President did—with the idea of a guarantee of safety from external aggression. He saw clearly that one was not permanently attainable without the other. During the transition period, while Europe was still disturbed, he proposed that "the Powers should guarantee the neutrality of Germany as she had guaranteed that of Belgium."<sup>1</sup> Afterward, when Germany came into the League of Nations, her external safety would, of course, be strengthened by the common guarantee of all nations.

I remember the surprised remark of a Frenchman re-

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Supreme War Council, March 10.

garding General Bliss: that it seemed strange that so great a soldier should also be so strong an advocate of military disarmament. But the fact was that General Bliss was first of all an American and after that a soldier. He was one of the best-trusted men at Paris, and the President relied heavily upon his advice, not only in military but often in other matters. In conferences he was the very personification of the gruff, silent, honest soldier. He is a strongly built man, not tall, and just a little stooping at the shoulders. Nature intended him to be a hairy man, gave him thick eyebrows and bristling moustache, and then changed its mind and made him bald—an extreme shiny baldness, except for a bristling fringe of hair at the back and sides of his head. His deep-set eyes appear at first rather sleepy, but when he warms up they open wide and glow with feeling. He is an intensely shy man, hating publicity above everything, asks profanely why the ideas are not enough without having to tag them with a name—his name, above all! He has been a hard student all his life. Years ago, when I first met him on a voyage to Panama, he was engaged day after day in investigating tables of experiments relating to army rationing; and at Paris no member of the delegation spent more time in the study of the fundamental problems which underlay the issues raised.

No man there believed more strongly in radical disarmament and the need for a league of nations than this old soldier with the four stars on his shoulder. It was with him a kind of spiritual attitude in which a new organization of nations, with a will to disarm, seemed as utterly reasonable, necessary, and practical as it seemed unattainable, absurd, unreal to those who could not escape the ancient ideas. But a league of nations all of which were armed to the teeth he did not believe in.

Indeed, one wonders if there can be any realization of the new ideas, the "new order," without this radical change of attitude—and that seems now a long way off. So General Bliss felt it and predicted more than once that if the problem of disarmament were not immediately and courageously faced the great war might prove only the first four years of a new Thirty Years' War.

We now come to the actual opening of the Peace Conference where the principles proposed by America, and accepted at the Armistice as the basis of the peace, were to be put to stern tests.

The first reference to the subject was on January 21, nine days after the Conference first met, and at the close of a discussion in the Council of Ten on what to do with the Russians, which had veered to the President's proposal to take immediate steps to organize a League of Nations. It was then that Mr. Balfour said he thought that inasmuch as a committee was now to be formed to consider the League of Nations, another committee should at once consider the problem of military disarmament.

If the League of Nations is to be practical [he said], the delegates must make up their minds as soon as possible regarding the question of disarmament. It was most important to come to some agreement as to what arms Germany was to be allowed to have. It is evident that a league of nations would be a sham if there is no disarmament.<sup>1</sup>

In this very first reference there begins to appear the two-fold nature of the problem of disarmament, which continued throughout the Conference. Here were two questions: First, the programme of general disarmament of all nations bound up with the League of Nations in which the Americans were chiefly interested; second, the immediate disarmament of Germany, in which the Allies

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 21.

were chiefly concerned. In the first the conferring powers must consider their own ultimate disarmament; in the second the disarmament of the enemy—vastly different problems.

I have commented elsewhere upon the extraordinary efficiency, due to long training, of the British and French foreign offices. They always had a plan ready, and even if the basic idea came, as did that of the limitation of armaments, from Americans, the resolution which placed it before the Council was often the product of these experienced diplomats. There is, obviously, a great advantage in this, as these experienced negotiators well knew, for a plan tends to shape the views of everyone present and place other conferees in the position of critics. Two days later, on January 23, when M. Clemenceau again raised the problem of disarmament, Mr. Lloyd George was ready with a draft of resolutions, in which the special and immediate problem of the disarmament of Germany is given first place.

That a Commission be appointed with two representatives apiece from each of the five Great Powers, and five representatives to be elected by the other Powers represented at the Conference:—

1. to advise an immediate and drastic reduction in the armed forces of the enemy;
2. to prepare a plan in connection with the League of Nations for a permanent reduction in the burden of military, naval and aerial forces and armaments.

Throughout the Conference, whenever Mr. Lloyd George presented a resolution, he was immediately on his feet with a glowing address in support of it. So it was now. He called attention to the fact that the draft contained two distinct proposals, but beyond this reference he gave his entire attention to the first—the disarmament

of Germany. Here is what he said, as set forth in the Secret Minutes:

A decision on this point was, for Great Britain, a matter of very grave moment. Unless the enemy's forces were immediately reduced, the British Government might be forced to maintain compulsory service. He did not know what might be the political result of such a decision. . . . He would, therefore, urge that the first clause in the draft be proceeded with at once. The second could be reserved for a future date.

This is a significant speech: as was also that of M. Clemenceau which followed it, proposing that Marshal Foch be summoned at once to discuss methods of disarming Germany. Here were expressed the immediate and burning issues that cried for settlement as European leaders had to face them. Here was the prompt proposal, so readily made in the earlier days of the Conference, particularly by the French, to call in the generals and make peace by military methods. Here also was the preoccupation of the leaders with the effect of action at Paris on home politics—to which Lloyd George was ever peculiarly susceptible. He was always thinking, as he here phrases it, "what might be the political result of such a decision." It was so easy to "proceed at once" with questions of immediate interest; so easy to reserve the general principles "for a future date." No one is to be censured for this; it is inevitable; it grew out of the situation, but it must be clearly noted in order to understand what happened at Paris. It characterized nearly every discussion of the Conference, and was, at its roots, the cause of every crisis—this mighty struggle between general principles and the programme for a permanent settlement, as supported by the Americans, and the immediate necessities, interests, and fears of the other

allied nations. In any future discussion of limitation of armaments exactly the same division is sure to appear, and it will require clearness of view and obstinacy of courage to maintain, among the confusion and dust of immediate and minor interests, any vision whatsoever of the general and permanent good of the world.

President Wilson saw the problem at Paris with penetrating clearness. He saw that the needs and fears of the Allies, as exhibited in this problem of limitation of armaments, if often exaggerated, had a real basis. Indeed, he was himself strongly for the disarmament of Germany, for he wished to release at the earliest possible moment the great American army still in France. But he never lost sight for a moment of his greater plan, his vision of a permanent peace upon a new basis of justice and international coöperation. The more insistent the demands for the consideration of immediate interests upon the part of the other leaders, the more determined his stand for a corresponding recognition of permanent principles.

If the Peace Conference, as it was plain enough from the discussion of January 23, were to insist upon the immediate disarmament of Germany, as provided in Clause 1 of the resolutions, then he proposed to insist upon the equal importance in the Treaty of Clause 2—the programme for general disarmament as set forth in the Covenant of the League. He drove his argument home a few days later, on January 29, in commenting on a statement made by M. Dmowski, the chief delegate of Poland, before the Council of Ten. M. Dmowski had appeared with an eloquent and lengthy appeal which ran counter to the whole principle of disarmament. He not only had no thought of limiting Polish armaments, but he argued that Poland was in a position of great danger between Germany and Russia, and that it needed more armament,

more military force, rather than less. Indeed, this was the insistent demand of the smaller nations throughout the Conference. The President's comment was:

M. Dmowski had said that Poland must be a barrier between Russia and Germany. Did that not mean a barrier based on armaments? Obviously not, because Germany would be disarmed and if Germany was disarmed Poland could not be allowed to arm except for police purposes. To carry out such disarmament the necessary instrumentality for superintendence would have to be set up. That was the gist of the question. Therefore, he would urge his colleagues to press on the drafting of the League of Nations in a definite form.<sup>1</sup>

President Wilson thus put the logic of his position—which contained, as before, the two mutually dependent proposals—disarmament to the point of “domestic safety,” or, as he here expresses it, “police purposes,” and the League of Nations to guarantee external safety. If there was to be the one, there must be the other.

From this time forward we find the problem of limitation of armaments proceeding in two distinct, though often commingling, streams through the Conference; each inevitably modifying and influencing the other. The immediate problem of disarming Germany, arranging military, naval, and air terms for the Treaty, deciding the disposition of German warships and cables, were all fought out, close up, first in the military and naval commissions and then in the Council of Ten and the Council of Four, while the broader and more general problem was discussed with no less vigour in the most important commission of the Conference, that on the organization of the League of Nations, of which President Wilson was chairman.

Two great problems at once arose, both of which are

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 30.

vital to any discussion, present or future, of the limitation of armament. One had to do with the fundamental question of a standard of armament. Was it to be "domestic safety" or some other standard? The other was a question of method—but a vital one—that of compulsory military service. In this latter question a direct issue was joined between the Americans and British, with their programme of complete abolition of compulsory service—and the French and Italians defending that institution, which they had copied from German practice as the bed-rock foundation of Continental safety and power. Here the issue was squarely drawn; here the battle began.

## CHAPTER XX

### LAND ARMAMENT AND FRENCH FEAR—STRUGGLE BETWEEN AMERICANS AND FRENCH OVER LIMITATION OF LAND ARMAMENT—COMPULSORY SERVICE AND PRIVATE MANUFACTURE OF MUNITIONS OF WAR

IT IS easy enough to accept general principles—all the world pays pious homage to the phrase “disarmament” or “limitation of armament”—but the real fight begins with the concrete application of those principles. When the first printed draft of Wilson’s Covenant was distributed, rumours soon became current in Paris of what the Americans really meant by the reduction of armaments as expressed in the fourth of the Fourteen Points, “to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.”

Article IV of the President’s mysterious new Covenant contained the terms of a programme that cut at the very root of Continental power and safety. Among other things, compulsory military service was to be abolished not only in Germany but everywhere—“all the powers subscribing to the Treaty of Peace.” The manufacture of “munitions and implements of war by private enterprise or for private profit” was to be forbidden. “Full and frank publicity as to all national armaments” was to disturb the cornerstone of secrecy upon which, under the old system, military preparation had always rested. And, above all, there was a new standard of armament

proposed: that of "domestic safety." It was as though Samson had given a first shake to the pillars of the Temple!

The storm broke at once; private conferences were held by the President, notably one with the alarmed Premier of Italy, Orlando, another in which the whole subject of the Covenant was discussed with Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts; and the discussion opened up soon afterward both in the Council of Ten and in the important League of Nations Commission. For Article IV of the Covenant based upon Point Four laid bare what was undoubtedly the fundamental problem of the Peace Conference: the problem of the safety of nations and by what means it was to be made secure.

The great war had shaken the old world into ruin; old habits and relationships had broken down; and each nation, feeling its very existence in danger, flew to arms to protect itself. A great fear prevailed. Each nation had reverted to a primitive reliance upon its own sword. The sword of France was its army, and the army rested upon the institution of compulsory service. The sword of Britain was her navy and her power upon the seas.

Therefore, the proposal to limit armaments struck at the very roots of European safety. When it touched land armament it set France and Italy a-shiver; when it touched naval armament, the British Empire shook, and every small nation in Europe, fearful of its neighbours, was in deadly fear lest, if it were not permitted to keep up a large army, its very existence would be endangered.

It would have been the wildest folly, as the President clearly saw, to propose any real disarmament without setting up some new guarantee of safety in place of it, which would relieve the fears of Europe and restore confidence. He proposed only what many thoughtful men

had proposed before him, and what the American colonies had achieved: a guarantee of safety based upon common agreement, backed by force if necessary, in which the nations could trust; in short, a strong coöperative league of nations.

But the President, like most Americans—for America had never been thoroughly frightened—did not fully realize until he arrived in Europe how enormously exaggerated were the fears and how precarious the safety of Europe; how every discussion, for example, where France was concerned, got back to a question of French security.

It was borne in upon him at every conference, the press was full of it, the very atmosphere recked with it.

On one occasion, in the Council:

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the French were the nearest neighbours of Germany, and could be at all times, as they had been in the past, suddenly attacked . . . France realized that Great Britain had responsibilities in all parts of the world, and could not keep the whole of her strength concentrated at one point. America was far away and could not come at once to the assistance of France. If the League of Nations and the peace of the world were to be established, it must not begin by placing France in a perilous position. America was protected by the whole breadth of the ocean, and Great Britain by her fleet.<sup>1</sup>

At every turn, also, the concrete evidences of what war meant to France were ready at hand; the visual demonstration of their reasons for being afraid. Clemenceau was forever interjecting into the discussion such remarks as—

The fact must be faced that during four years of war the countryside of France had been devastated and subjected to the worst kind of savagery. . . . He wished to repeat what he had already said, namely, that the fortune of war had been such that neither American

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 30.

nor British territories had suffered, whilst the territory of France had been so ravaged that it would seem as though recovery would be impossible. . . . The industries of France had been scientifically destroyed. . . . France had lost 3,000,000 men, either killed or mutilated.<sup>1</sup>

The President clearly revealed in his speeches at that time that he realized increasingly the gravity of the problem.

I remember well the powerful impression made upon a crowded audience in the French Chamber of Deputies by the President's address delivered February 3, soon after he had visited the ruins at Rheims. ("I saw the noble city of Rheims in ruins, and I could not help saying to myself: 'Here is where the blow fell, because the rulers of the world did not sooner see how to prevent it.'") He said of France in this address:

Hers was the immediate peril. Hers was the constant dread. . . . I do not need to point out to you that east of you in Europe the future is full of question. Beyond the Rhine, across Germany, across Poland, across Russia, across Asia, there are questions unanswered. . . . France stands in the presence of these threatening and unanswered questions—threatening because unanswered—stands waiting for the solution of matters which touch her directly, intimately, and constantly, and if she must stand alone, what must she do?

Here the President was putting the problem of the French as eloquently as they themselves put it; but his proposal for meeting it was wholly different from that of the French. When reduced to its last analysis the French saw safety only in military armament, an armed nation or an armed alliance; while the President saw safety only in a coöperation of nations, "which will make it unneces-

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Supreme War Council, February 12.

sary, in the future, to maintain those crushing armaments which make the peoples suffer almost as much in peace as they suffered in war."

The French position at Paris was set forth and defended with matchless ingenuity and obstinacy. No matter what party a leader belonged to, or whether he was a statesman, a soldier, a diplomat, or a financier, he was first of all French—100 per cent. French!—and moved straight ahead securing French safety. Foch had a military plan of safety, Bourgeois a diplomatic plan, Loucheur and Klotz an economic plan (but the coördination between them was perfect), and Clemenceau was the supreme strategist of the entire campaign. If the French did not achieve all they sought at Paris, it was not for lack of sheer intelligence!

The French had their entire programme worked out before the Peace Conference met. They were the first to place their memoranda in the President's hands. No other nation approached them—unless it was the Japanese—in diplomatic preparedness or singleness of purpose. The British seemed not prepared at all; always appeared to live from hand to mouth, diplomatically speaking, and yet never lost a trick, while the Italians were so divided in their inner councils as never to strike any clear note.

Among the President's papers is Marshal Foch's detailed memorandum on the military aspects of French safety, dated January 10 (two days before the first session of the Peace Conference); so also is the Bourgeois plan for a league of nations, and certain early memoranda, concerning the economic aspects of French safety.<sup>1</sup>

Marshal Foch wishes to hold the Rhine as the "common barrier of security necessary to the league of democratic nations," and in order to do this he demands that "the

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Documents 25 and 17, for texts.

powers of the Entente . . . be organized henceforth on a military basis to render possible the timely intervention of the other States which are the defenders of civilization." His league would, in effect, be a continuation of the alliance of the allied powers that won the war, with a strong unified military force holding the Rhine.

When M. Bourgeois, a scholar, a diplomat, long a distinguished leader, and once Premier of France, introduced the French plan for a league of nations (in the League of Nations Commission, two weeks later), it was found to harmonize completely with Marshal Foch's military plan. It filled in the details of the organization behind the line of defense. It provided for an international army and navy, with a permanent staff to see that this force was kept up to standard and to prepare plans for its speedy and effective use. So far from forcing the abolition of compulsory military service, it provided for the possible adoption of that principle by the entire world, for it permitted the international body to require a member State to adopt compulsory service on recommendation of the General Staff. Its emphasis was on fixing minimum rather than maximum limits upon armaments.<sup>1</sup>

On February 7, the French economists set up the third leg of the tripod upon which French security was to rest. This was in a report on the disarmament of Germany by a committee of the Supreme War Council headed by M. Loucheur.<sup>2</sup> M. Loucheur was one of the able financial leaders of France and was serving in Clemenceau's Cabinet as Minister of Reconstruction. This report proceeded upon the assumption that modern war rests on an economic basis. In order, therefore, to be absolutely

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 17, for complete text of the French plan of a league of nations.

<sup>2</sup>See Volume III, Document 21, for full text.

safe, the Allies must not only impose military disarmament upon Germany with the control of the Rhine frontier, backed by an armed league of nations, but Germany must also be disarmed or crippled economically. For here the French clearly recognized their inferiority. The Loucheur report called for supplementing military disarmament by a control of the arms and munitions factories of Germany to prevent rearming. Allied officers were thus to supervise German industry to see that military supplies were not produced. As a secondary proposal the Loucheur report called for the "absolute control by military occupation of . . . Essen and the principal Krupp establishments, the greater part of the Rhenish-Westphalian coal fields and the metallic industries which depend upon these."

President Wilson was vigorous in his expression regarding the findings of M. Loucheur, which General Bliss had also opposed when they were advanced earlier in the Supreme War Council. He even went so far as to call it a "panic programme." Here is his exact comment:

President WILSON considered the recommendations contained in the Loucheur report to be a panic programme. The report not only called for the surrender of big guns, which in his opinion should be given up, but it also went into details of aircraft and factory production. . . . He thought that if officers were sent there they would get into trouble and would have to be supported by military forces.<sup>1</sup>

While the Loucheur programme was defeated by American and British criticism, yet the basic idea of crippling Germany permanently in an economic sense, as a guarantee of French security, lay deep underneath the struggle for the permanent control of the coal of the

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 7.

Saar, the permanent control of the Rhine frontier, and the weakening of Germany in the Silesian districts. It was even directly proposed by the French during the month while President Wilson was absent from the Peace Conference (on the voyage to America, February 15 to March 15) that there should be a perpetual supervision by commissions of German armament and of German industry in so far as it might possibly be turned to the production of armament—which meant, in effect, the permanent supervision by French, British, American, and Italian officers of German chemical, airplane, and steel industries. We find Clemenceau saying on March 3:

He was not content to tell Germany to limit her forces until the Peace Terms were fulfilled and to leave the future to the mercy of events. . . . Other countries might be content with transitory naval terms. He himself was not prepared to sign an invitation to Germany to prepare for another attack by land after an interval of three, ten, or even forty years. He would not be prepared to sign a peace of that character.<sup>1</sup>

Two days after the President returned to France, when these proposals came up in the Council, he attacked them vigorously and secured sweeping modifications. He called them “an instrumentality permanently limiting the sovereignty of Germany” and this he could not accept, for it meant an “indefinite continuation” of the military control of Germany. It also meant constant interference, meddling, and prying into trade secrets, which would certainly lead again to war. He said:

If the allied armies were to be maintained forever, in order to control the carrying out of the Peace Terms; not peace, but Allied armed domination would have been established. His Government would never agree to enter such an arrangement, and, were he to enter into

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten.

such an agreement, he would be far exceeding his authority under the United States Constitution.<sup>1</sup>

What he proposed was to limit the activity of the interallied commissions to the period during which the reduction of German armaments would be carried out, and in all prohibitive clauses he changed the word "never" to "not."

The singleness of devotion to the idea of French safety impaled France upon the horns of a hopeless dilemma, where she still struggles. For, if Germany was crippled and weakened economically, how could she pay the huge bill for reparations? Thus was France buffeted between her fear and her need—but the fear was then, and has been ever since, the really dominating element. Distressing as was French devastation, France desired safety more than reconstruction. This was the inevitable logic of the military spirit, which is inspired by fear and stimulates in a nation a greater concern for the weakening or destruction of her enemy than for her own recovery. For, if Germany were allowed to build herself up economically in order to pay reparations, she would at the same time reestablish her old predominant position as a power greater in population and with a more highly developed industrial organization than France, and therefore, according to military logic, again dangerous to French safety.

This dilemma was strikingly illustrated by the controversy over the Army of Occupation. The French demanded that a great army remain stationed on the Rhine, the cost of maintenance to be borne by Germany. Time and again it was argued that this meant a reduction of reparation. In one of his slashing outbursts, Lloyd George said that "when the German Army was reduced to

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, March 17.

a strength of 100,000 men, it was ridiculous to maintain an army of occupation of 200,000 men on the Rhine.

. . . It would cost 100 millions [sterling] a year if the burden were placed on the German Exchequer and the result of this would be that there would be nothing left for compensation.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed the cost of this army of occupation since the Armistice has been stupendous. Up to April, 1921, according to figures officially issued by the Reparations Commission, the totals are as follows in gold marks:

	<i>Gold Marks</i>
France . . . . .	1,276,450,838
United States . . . . .	1,167,327,830
Great Britain . . . . .	991,016,859
Belgium . . . . .	194,706,228
Italy . . . . .	10,064,861

Yet the French consistently preferred these enormous expenditures for safety rather than for reconstruction. Of course, there is another aspect of this policy, for by this method, bitterly and somewhat exaggeratedly described by Lloyd George in the argument of June 2, already referred to, “of quartering the French army on Germany and making Germany pay the cost,” France gets back part of that cost. In passing, it may be noted that Germany is now being taxed to support the militarism in France from which she has herself been absolved, though by no desire of her own.

Thus did the insatiable demand for safety operate in the economic field; and thus did the economists work together with the soldiers and the diplomats for the French conception of safety—although at the same time pursuing the irreconcileable aim of reparation.

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, June 2.

All these elements in the French position must be borne in mind in order to understand the struggle over the limitation of armaments.

We come now to the detailed items of that struggle; and the first of these concerns the vital problem of a future standard of armament. What military force should a nation be permitted to keep?

President Wilson's original conception of a standard of disarmament as set forth in Point Four was a reduction "to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety"—which will no doubt in future, when the world is genuinely prepared to face the problem, be found to be the only safe standard upon which to base the mutual guarantee of an association of nations.

But when this drastic proposal came up for the first reading in the League of Nations Commission, February 6, the word "domestic" was at once pounced upon. France, Italy, and Japan were all against that standard of land armament, even when counterbalanced by the guarantee of a league of nations, and Great Britain was also probably uncertain as to what it meant in its possible application to naval armament. The actual objection in the meeting came from Baron Makino, the Japanese delegate. He suggested that the words "national safety" be substituted for "domestic safety," and this was adopted and so appears in the final draft of the Treaty.

"National safety" as against "domestic safety" represented a weakening of the President's original idea; but in that tumultuous time, before the League was organized, national safety loomed as an overwhelming problem. But the change in wording let in the whole array of French argument and appeal for France's own national safety and a hopeless effort to determine what military force was sufficient for national safety, when

each nation was its own judge of what was necessary to its safety.

M. Bourgeois was quick to seize upon the change in wording to emphasize his demand that the new standard of "national safety" not only demanded strong national armament but a league of nations with an international control of armament and a general staff.

One of the bitterest controversies of the entire Conference developed around this difference between the American view and that of the French.

The French advanced still another proposal designed to insure their own safety—a doctrine of special risk—that some nations (France particularly), owing to their geographical position, were more exposed to attack than others and that, therefore, they should be permitted a larger armament than others, or be protected by special guarantees. It was the logic of this "special risk" that, later in the Conference, led to the agreement upon a special Anglo-American agreement to come to the defense of France in case of attack by Germany. In the President's view this was a better method of temporarily calming French fears than the adoption of any of the various military guarantees obstinately demanded by the French. At least it was a method of peace and coöperation.

President Wilson, strongly supported by Lord Robert Cecil, opposed the French idea of international armament. He saw in it, as he said, a method of "substituting international militarism for national militarism," and the whole idea of control was repugnant to him.

No nation [he said] will consent to control. As for us Americans, we cannot consent to control because of our Constitution. We must do everything that is possible to ensure the safety of the world. . . . I know how France has suffered, and I know that she wishes to obtain the best guarantees possible before she enters the League, and every-

thing that we can do in this direction we shall do, but we cannot accept proposals which are in direct contradiction to our Constitution. . . . The only method by which we can achieve this end lies in our having confidence in the good faith of the nations who belong to the League. There must be between them a cordial agreement and good will.<sup>1</sup>

But the formidable Bourgeois, though voted down in the Commission, never surrendered in his main contention and kept bringing up his proposal for a military league in various forms, directly and indirectly; and when he failed to make his point, final French acceptance of the American-British form of the Covenant was, in part, conditioned upon the special guarantee by America and Great Britain, in order to quiet French fears, until "the League itself affords sufficient protection," to come to the support of France in case of attack by Germany.

But if the Allies refused to adopt the President's standard of disarmament as applying to themselves, if they whittled down as much as they could the American programme, yet when the problem of disarming Germany arose, they applied both the principle and the programme almost literally—for it seemed, in that case, perfectly reasonable. On February 12, President Wilson thus stated the programme as pertaining to German disarmament:

Disarmament contained two elements—(1) the maintenance of an adequate force for internal police; (2) the national contribution to the general force of the future League of Nations. At present we did not contemplate that Germany should make any contribution to the latter force. . . . All we need contemplate was the amount of armed force required by Germany to maintain internal order and to keep down Bolshevism. . . . In general he felt that until we knew what the German Government was going to be and how the German people were going to behave, the world had a moral right to

<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, February 11, pp. 43-45.

disarm Germany, and to subject her to a generation of thoughtfulness.<sup>1</sup>

So it was that the ideal standard was applied to the enemy, compulsory service abolished, the army reduced to a police force of 100,000 men, and the navy to a mere basis of defense. Moreover, as a concession to the French demand for international control which had failed of acceptance as a general proposition, Germany's armaments are subject to investigation at any time by majority vote of the League of Nations, even after her admission.

So much for the struggle over a standard of disarmament; we come now to the equally bitter controversy over the terms in the programme, and the first and most important of these was the proposal to abolish compulsory service.

This proposal cut at the very root of the Continental military system; and yet the President was here only giving the commonplace American interpretation of the principle of Point Four, asking that the world accept the traditional American (and British) policy of volunteer armies as contrasted with conscript armies. Germany had been the originator of the modern practice of compulsory service, and it had become the highest expression of the military spirit. He was proposing a wholly different practice, not theoretical, but the traditional method of the English-speaking races. Later the proposal, as applied to the smaller States, was to be known, in the discussions of the Council of Four, as the "American-British Proposal," as contrasted with the "French-Italian Proposal."

Protests were made at once; one of the earliest by Orlando of Italy. We know exactly what Orlando told

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 12.

the President, for we have it in his own words, used later, in the Council of Four (May 15):

As he had then explained to President Wilson, Italy would not be able to raise an Army by voluntary service. Such a system would be too difficult in its application, since the whole traditions of the country went against it. Consequently, the Italian Army would have to be organized on a basis of compulsory service.

It appeared also that the French held exactly the same position.

Even though the President's proposal looked only to the future, when the League of Nations should be functioning, and provided that the plans formulated should "be binding when and only when unanimously approved by the Governments signatory to this covenant"—which might be a long way off—yet the Italians and French were fearful even of discussing the principle as concerning themselves; though they later agreed, with reluctance, to the application of it to Germany and Austria.

These considerations were brought up also in the Conference with Lord Robert Cecil and General Smuts, in January. Both of these men shared the strong aversion of English-speaking races to the idea of compulsory service, but both also recognized the practical difficulty of securing the support of France and Italy to a future co-operation of the nations with so strong a provision regarding compulsory service. In the Hurst-Miller draft of the Covenant, therefore, the provision regarding compulsory service was thus whittled down:

It [the Executive Council] shall also enquire into the feasibility of abolishing compulsory military service, and the substitution therefor of forces enrolled upon a voluntary basis, and into the military and naval equipment which it is reasonable to maintain.

But even this device of mere inquiry was too strong for the French, and when the article came up for the first time in the League of Nations Commission (February 6), which met in the evening in Colonel House's large office in the Hotel Crillon, we find M. Bourgeois rising quickly to object. He did not wish even the possibility of abolishing compulsory service to be discussed.

This position was further developed by Signor Orlando of Italy and M. Larnaude, the other French delegate, and, finally, in order to meet this determined opposition even to the mention of compulsory military service and yet keep a door open for future action by the League of Nations the President proposed the following substitute:

The Executive Council shall also determine for the consideration and action of the several Governments what military equipment and armament is fair and reasonable in proportion to the scale of forces laid down in the programme of disarmament; and these limits, when adopted, shall not be exceeded without the permission of the Body of Delegates.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the President here throws the whole power of initiating action in the matter of limitation of armament into the hands of the future League of Nations. While this proposal was adopted at the moment, it did not, by any means, close the discussion, and the final wording of the proposal was reached only after much controversy and the introduction of the idea of "special risk" so vigorously demanded by the French. Here is the wording as it finally appears in the Treaty:

The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments. Such

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<sup>1</sup>Minutes, League of Nations Commission, February 6, p. 25.

plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years. After these plans shall have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.

But the abolition of compulsory service was forced upon Germany! And it may, indeed, prove to be one of the real gains at Paris—this destruction of the practice in the citadel of its origin. It will undoubtedly have far-reaching economic as well as military results; for a million or so young men will be working in industry in Germany while a corresponding million or so are marching and learning to shoot at the expense of the State in France and Italy.

A real gain was also made in the matter of publicity as a factor in the limitation of armaments. Publicity, in President Wilson's first draft of the Covenant, had formed one of the cornerstones of the programme. "There shall be full and frank publicity as to all national armaments and military and naval programmes." Here again French fears presented an obstacle. M. Bourgeois argued that so long as certain powers (he meant Germany) remained outside the League, it would be folly to let them know the military secrets of those inside; and even when they came in, one must not trust them too far. What he wanted was publicity regarding the German armament, but not the armament of the allied nations. Finally, "full and frank publicity" became "interchange of information" among the members of the League—a more limited proposal, but an advance over anything in the past. The final clause of the Covenant upon this subject reads as follows:

The members of the League undertake to exchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval, and air programmes and the condition of such of their industries as are adaptable to war-like purposes.

In the matter of manufacture of munitions of war by private enterprise, though the President did not secure his full programme, yet there is an advance over anything in the past. The President had taken a positive stand on this subject in his original Covenant. "The contracting powers further agree that munitions and implements of war shall not be manufactured by private enterprise or for private profit." This occasioned considerable discussion: it would place weak nations, with little industrial development, at the mercy of great nations. The provision was cut out of one draft of the Covenant, restored in another by the President's motion, and it finally appears in the Treaty as follows:

The Members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objections. The Council shall advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of these Members of the League which are not able to manufacture the munitions and implements of war necessary for their safety.

Not only are there these gains in dealing with concrete aspects of the problem of disarmament, but the Treaty sets up machinery which has been used to bring the subject of limitation of armaments to the attention of the whole world. This provision is in Article IX, of the Covenant, which was originally presented (by Lord Robert Cecil) as a compromise with the French demand for an international general staff. It provides that "a permanent Commission shall be constituted to advise the Council on the execution of Articles I and VIII on military, naval, and air questions generally." This permanent commission was named at the Rome meeting of the council in May, 1920, and its first work was not to draw up plans for the

use of League forces, as the French desired, but to set up inquiries regarding limitation of armaments as the council is empowered to do under Article VIII.

Another important general gain lies in the formal acknowledgment by all the nations signatory to the Treaty that the general limitation of armaments is one of the conditions of the peace. This originated in a proposal by President Wilson on April 26 for a preamble to the military, naval, and air clauses of the Treaty, which now appears on page 74 of that document. This was the colloquy:

President WILSON suggested that it would make the Naval, Military and Air terms more acceptable to the enemy if they were presented as preparing the way for a general limitation of armaments for all nations.

M. CLEMENCEAU said he would like to see the formula before he agreed.<sup>1</sup>

The preamble was finally couched in the following words:

In order to render possible the initiation of general limitation of the armaments of all nations Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval, and air clauses which follow.

General Bliss regards this as one of the most important provisions in the Treaty. "In all good faith and honour," he said in his address at Philadelphia, "these [twenty-seven nations and Germany] have pledged themselves to initiate as soon as practicable a general limitation of armaments after Germany has complied with her first obligation."<sup>2</sup>

But the greatest gain of all, potentially, was in securing

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 26

<sup>2</sup>"What Really Happened at Paris," p. 372.

the adoption of a new instrumentality in the League of Nations for guaranteeing the safety of nations, thereby relieving them of the necessity of keeping up great armaments to preserve their own safety. This is the root of the problem of national safety. Once accepted and used this would represent the most fundamental factor of all in reducing armament. To have got the League through and to have brought all the allied nations into it without admitting the poisonous element of the French armament plan, and thus extending rather than curtailing military organization and armament, was in itself a great achievement, although purchased at the sacrifice of part of the actual disarmament programme.

Up to the present moment the League has not been able to make any material progress toward reduction. Even the proposal of the first Assembly that the nations agree not to increase their armaments budget for two years met with no conclusive response. Efforts to collect information regarding existing forces and estimated requirements as the basis for a programme of reduction have proved similarly unfruitful. There is no disguising the fact that the main obstacle in the way of progress with the reduction of land armament is France, the leading military power of the present day. France is not satisfied with the guarantees she possesses against Germany. Had she obtained the special pledges of support from the United States and Great Britain, or the establishment of a strong international military organization under the League, or even a permanent control over German armaments, the case might possibly be different. She is still hoping for and striving after all these things, the things she asked at Paris. So long as she does not obtain them she is unwilling to relinquish the slightest degree of independence in the determination of her own military

policy. She will not so much as accept a discussion of the subject or give an estimate of her requirements, even though discussion and estimates be based on the doctrine of special risk which the French themselves inserted in the Covenant. When the effort was made to pursue the subject outside the League, in a conference including the United States as well as the League Powers, France's attitude remained the same. At the Washington Conference on Limitation of Armaments Premier Briand stated flatly his refusal to discuss the reduction of France's army, rehearsing all the familiar arguments for his stand. At the Genoa Conference the French were even more intransigent. The situation remains exactly as it was in 1919.

This situation is by no means simple. So long as France stands for the enforcement against Germany of terms of which the other Powers do not approve and believe to be dangerous to the future peace of the world, they cannot whole-heartedly give her the support and guarantees she demands. And since a considerable proportion of the terms to which France clings have no validity apart from their backing of armed force, she has no choice but to try and supply that force herself. Yet this, in turn, is a hopeless position for her to take: if put to the test, it leads to her own isolation.

The only way out is by the road of sincere and world-wide international coöperation. No four powers, or nine powers, or any special alliance of great nations can save the situation. If the Washington Conference of 1921-22 proved anything, it proved exactly President Wilson's contention that no great progress can be made toward freeing the world of the burden of competitive armaments without substituting some effective guarantee of national security in their place. The particular instrument of true inter-

national coöperation is not so important as the determination to use it with good-will to achieve true justice and peace in the world. Such an instrument already exists in the League of Nations; but the spirit is wanting. If the nations would take this instrument and use it vigorously in times less feverish than those of 1919, to grapple with the fears and greeds, not only of France but of all other nations, a speedy improvement of the present intolerable situation could certainly be counted upon.

## CHAPTER XXI

### PROBLEMS OF NAVAL DISARMAMENT AT PARIS—AMERICAN PROGRAMME OF SINKING THE GERMAN SHIPS DEFEATED BY FRENCH DEMAND FOR DISTRIBUTION—BRITISH SEA POLICY

**N**AVAL disarmament was never discussed at Paris with anything like the completeness and frankness which characterized the controversy over limitation of land armament and the abolition of compulsory military service.

There were the best of reasons for this. Great Britain, whose power was on the sea, emerged from the war in a widely different situation from the French. The French, as a result of the war, felt themselves, in the stew of Continental Europe, less secure than before, and the whole problem of military armament or an alliance of armed nations to fortify French security became of burning importance. The British, on the other hand, came out of the war feeling more secure. Their only great naval rival in Europe was crushed: the redoubtable German fleet, two score of great battleships and cruisers, a hundred or more lesser fighting vessels, lay rusting safely in the northern British harbour of Scapa Flow. The slight future threat of submarine warfare or of armed flying craft could be easily dealt with in the coming Peace Conference.

In the past the next most important world naval power, the United States, had derived great strength from the potential hostility of the British and German fleets, each

of which was kept close at home for fear of the other. But the disappearance of the German Navy left the British in a position of unparalleled power upon the seas, which they continue to hold to-day. This was further augmented by the alliance between the British and the Japanese, the third great naval power of the world. While the possibility of a conflict between Great Britain and the United States was remote, not merely for reasons of sentiment, which were powerful, but because both had plenty of room in the world and there was no real cause for aggression upon the part of either, yet the fact of Great Britain's supremacy upon the seas was a potent element in determining her course at the Peace Conference.

Thus it was that, while the central policy of the French was to struggle desperately at Paris for more power, more security, and even more rather than less military armament, thereby bringing all the problems of compulsory military service, private manufacture of war munitions, and the like, strongly into the foreground, the central policy of the British was to preserve the *status quo*. The French (and the Italians) had something to get at the Peace Conference, while the British (and the Japanese) had only something to keep. The French felt their weakness, their potential inferiority at Paris; the British knew their power, and they acted to perfection according to the traditional British diplomatic policy: "Wait and see."

While the chief interest of the French—then and since—was their own safety rather than reparations or future commercial expansion, the chief interest of the British was to make sure of the new access to raw materials, the new trade routes, the new colonies, which were already practically in their possession, and to secure a proper share of the reparations.

Thus it was that while the vital problem of sea power loomed sometimes in the background of the discussions at Paris, and once, in April, while the disposition of the captured German Navy was sharply under consideration—it even threatened to break through the barriers of avoidance which seemed always to hedge it about—it was never really and frankly met. It was not met because it did not have to be met, while the problem of land armament did have to be met. It did not have to be provided for in the Treaty. It was a matter not so much between the Allies and Germany, as between Great Britain, America, and Japan.

But the British left no doubt whatever as to their absolute commitment to the idea of British naval supremacy.

In November, 1918, only a short time after the Armistice, Winston Spencer Churchill, then British Minister of Munitions, put the position bluntly in a speech at Dundee. He said, "a league of nations is no substitute for the supremacy of the British fleet."

The British, although in a far stronger position, left no more doubt than the French as to what they considered their basic requirement—their own security. Both before and after the President's arrival in Europe their press was full of it; it was echoed by every public speaker.

"One thing is clear," said the London *Times* of December 11. "This war could not have been won for civilization but for the British sea power. There can therefore be no question, so far as this country is concerned, of diminishing the sharpness of the weapon that has given us the victory in this war."

Practically every argument that was adduced by the French was also put forward by the British. There was the argument of "special risk"; that Great Britain was in

a peculiarly dangerous position. "We could not give up our naval superiority, because we are an island power," wrote Gilbert Murray; "and if we were once defeated at sea and blockaded we could all be starved to death or submission in a few weeks."

And just as Léon Bourgeois argued for the French that if the guarantee of the League of Nations was accepted, as a substitute for armament in securing the safety of France, a permanent military organization and a general staff would be a necessary feature of the League, so the British Admiralty envisaged a possible League naval staff—which they promptly rejected.

Powerful elements in Great Britain, exactly as in France, also suggested special alliances which would further guarantee their security—an alliance which the French finally secured in the Anglo-American Treaty. In Great Britain the suggestion took the form of an Anglo-American alliance.

"All of us," said the London *Times* of December 11, 1918, "recognize that the future happiness of the world depends on drawing closer the bonds between us and the United States, and to that end we shall work with all the strength that is in us."

But in England, as in France, the President hewed to the line of his original programme of a league of nations which would eventually guarantee the safety which the nations imperatively demanded. He talked not armaments or alliances, but a "concert of power."

"There must now be," as he told the English in his Guildhall speech of December 28, "not a balance of power, not one powerful group of nations set off against another, but a single overwhelming, powerful group of nations who shall be the trustee of the peace of the world."

He had accepted the British modification of the Armis-

tice terms in regard to the "freedom of the seas" because, as he told a group of his associates at Paris, when he came to examine the question of the freedom of the seas in relation to the League of Nations he saw that, in case of war in the future, there would be no neutrals with property rights to protect, for, under the League, all nations would join to enforce its decisions as against the unruly nation or nations, and the seas would be controlled by the powers of the League. The important thing, therefore, was first to get the League, with its essential guarantees of safety, and then the associated nations could work out regulations for sea traffic and provide for limitations of naval armaments.

In England the President found a support for his programme that did not exist in France: for in France the leadership was unified by a common fear, while in England the sense of naval superiority encouraged the development of two groups of opinion. One was the conservative, Admiralty-influenced group—the *Morning Post*, Lord Curzon, Winston Spencer Churchill—which was for maintaining naval supremacy at all odds and for more rather than less sea power. The *Morning Post* saw in the League of Nations only an "insidious scheme for internationalizing the British Empire and distributing its resources among foreigners."

But there was another powerful liberal-labour group in the empire, led by such men as General Smuts and Lord Robert Cecil, expressed by such newspapers as the Manchester *Guardian*, which strongly supported the President's programme. While they were never for weakening the security of Great Britain, especially in a time of world turmoil, they shared the President's vision of world safety not dependent upon the dominant military power of any one State, not even Great Britain, but upon

a generous coöperation of the nations in guaranteeing their mutual safety. They looked forward to the future limitation of naval armament and to a league of nations that "should discharge for liberty some of the functions hitherto performed by the British Navy."

As for Mr. Lloyd George he used and played both of these groups at Paris as the momentary exigencies of politics demanded. He took with him as his immediate associates, however—and this is significant—the chief League of Nations advocates, Smuts and Cecil, and even a representative, in Mr. Barnes, of the labour group; but on occasion he summoned Churchill and Curzon as counter-irritants. Clemenceau represented the unity of France; Lloyd George, the diversity of Britain. The League of Nations would, of course, never have materialized at all if it had not been for the determined team-play of American and British liberals.

I have referred to the two groups of opinion in Great Britain regarding the limitation of naval armament; but there were also two in America, and both were represented at Paris. For if there were British leaders who saw the future security of their empire dependent upon the supremacy of naval armament, so there were American leaders who feared for the future security of America unless American naval armament was at least equal to that of Great Britain. Among the very able reports submitted to the Peace Conference were those of Admiral Benson, American naval adviser, and his argument, early and late, was that the United States should have a fleet equal to that of Great Britain. In a memorandum submitted to the President on April 9 he sets forth the case of the strong navy group.<sup>1</sup> With the

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Documents 22 and 23, for text of this memorandum and another submitted March 14.

German fleet destroyed, the British Navy is more powerful in the world than ever before, "strong enough to dominate the seas in whatever quarter of the globe that domination may be required." This is not only dangerous, he argues, for America, but "it hampers our influence in the councils of the world whether within the League or outside of it."

Just as the military men of France and Great Britain argue "special risk" as a reason for armament, so also does Admiral Benson for America:

Our own present and prospective world position needs special consideration. We are setting out to be the greatest commercial rival of Great Britain on the seas. . . . Heretofore we have lived apart, but now we are to live in constant and intimate relation with the rest of the world. We must be able to enter every world conference with the confidence of equality.

He argued, therefore, for an American Navy equal to that of Great Britain and suggested, in order to secure this without increasing world armament, that the British Navy be reduced to an equality with the American Navy and afterward that "Great Britain and America determine jointly from time to time what the strength of the two fleets shall be."

In this position Admiral Benson was strongly supported by Secretary Daniels, who came to Paris during the Peace Conference.

"The United States should have a navy equal to any that sails the seas," he said.

Indeed, it is possible to quote President Wilson himself as supporting this programme—before we came into the war. He said in an address at St. Louis, February 3, 1916:

There is no other navy in the world that has to cover so great an area of defense as the American Navy, and it ought, in my judgment, to be incomparably the most adequate navy in the world.

He recognized as clearly in the case of America as in that of France or Great Britain that security was fundamental, and that if the sense of security that rested upon armament was to be disturbed by limiting armament, then there must be a new guarantee of safety set up. If the basis of the peace was to be armed ships and great guns, as it had been in the past, then America must be prepared for that also; but he was for another method, and to this he bent every energy at Paris, and he was supported by the liberal-labour group in Great Britain, who saw as clearly and dreaded as profoundly the possibility of a new competition in naval armament.

No one at Paris was a more ardent advocate of limitation of land armament than Lloyd George, and none avoided the problem of limitation of naval armament, except as it applied to Germany, more skillfully.

British naval supremacy was assured as the result of the war; the British policy, therefore, was merely to preserve that supremacy.

Only one thing immediately threatened to make it less pronounced—and that was the possible distribution of the great rival German and Austrian fleets among the allied and associated Powers. Most of these ships were safely interned and guarded in the British Harbour of Scapa Flow. In total, these constituted a great and powerful fleet: 27 battleships and battle cruisers, including several great dreadnoughts; 19 light cruisers; 101 destroyers, and about 135 submarines. Admiral Benson estimated that the distribution of these German-Austrian ships would increase the strength of the naval armaments of the great Powers about 30 per cent. The

American naval advisers had no doubt what ought to be done with them; they ought to be sailed out into the deep sea, the sea cocks opened, and the entire fleet sunk to the bottom.

"The destruction of the German-Austrian vessels," said Admiral Benson, "would be a practical demonstration to the world of the sincerity of the High Contracting Parties in their determination to reduce armaments."

Admiral Benson assumed in his reports that Great Britain desired distribution rather than destruction; but there is little to bear out this assumption. The difficulties would be too great, the rivalries aroused too bitter, and in the end the distribution might well reduce the ratio of ascendancy of the British. Besides, the German ships were built on wholly different mechanical standards from the British—by metric measurements—and maintenance might have been almost as expensive as the production of new ships. Although Lloyd George apparently used the disposition of the German ships strategically in the conferences, the destruction of the rival navy seems to have been the real policy of the British Admiralty. It was the French who stood out for distribution; who desired to increase, rather than decrease, their armaments.

The naval conditions of the peace proposed by the admirals in the session of March 6 provided for the destruction of all submarines and all warships beyond those Germany should be permitted to retain. The French reserved on each of these clauses and a long tussle began. It finally headed up in a sharp passage during a meeting on April 25 at President Wilson's residence in the Place des Etats-Unis. The Italian Premier had gone home to protest against the attitude of the council regarding Fiume. Only the so-called "Big Three" were in attend-

ance—Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clemenceau—but each had with him his chief naval adviser, Admiral Benson for America, Rear Admiral Hope for Great Britain, and Admiral de Bon for France. It was at this meeting that a general discussion of naval disarmament was almost precipitated, as will be seen in the remarks of Lloyd George:

Admiral BENSON pointed out that any decision, except to sink the ships, meant an increase of armaments.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said he could give Admiral Benson his proposal for stopping the increase of armaments, and even bring about a decrease, but he doubted if the Admiral would accept it. [The proposal an American Admiral would find unacceptable meant probably a proposal for reduction, keeping to existing proportions.] The British Government did not want these ships and were ready to discuss even the decrease of Navies, provided all would agree. This, however, was a very big question. . . . He fully agreed that the French position in this matter ought to be considered. His idea was that France should have some of these ships, and sink a corresponding number of old ships, or, if unwilling to sink them, she might break them up, which Admiral Hope told him would be a business proposition.

President Wilson then asked the reason for the French objection to the destruction of the ships and Admiral de Bon replied:

Admiral DE BON said the reason was, first, that by sinking the ships, valuable property would be destroyed, and there would be an increase in the general losses of the war. French public opinion was strongly against this. A more especial reason was, however, that if the ships were divided among the Allied and Associated Powers it would make a considerable addition . . . to the peace strength of the French Navy. During five years, owing to the immense efforts of French industries in supplying the armies, it had not been possible to complete any capital ships. These ships would be very useful to show the French flag and spread the national influence in the world.

France's naval strength was greatly reduced, especially as compared with other nations. For no aggressive desires of any kind, France did not want to lose this opportunity for repairing her losses.

The result was a postponement of the question of disposal, which was a virtual victory of the principle of distribution as supported by the French.

But the problem was strangely taken out of the hands of the Peace Conference and settled in another way. On June 21 the Germans who still manned the ships at Scapa Flow, by concerted action, themselves opened the sea cocks and sunk most of their own ships in the harbour. The disposal of those that remained was a matter of little concern. Lloyd George offered them all to France to restrain Clemenceau from making this and other incidents the occasion for a new resort to force. They might make good France's naval war losses, but all prospect was destroyed of considerably adding to her naval armament. Thus it was the act of the Germans in scuttling their ships, rather than the decisions of the Peace Conference, that prevented a considerable increase, rather than a limitation of naval armaments on the part of the allied Powers. But Germany was disarmed on sea, although not as completely as on the land. The Treaty allows her six battleships and six light cruisers, with twelve destroyers and twelve torpedo boats. These have obviously no connection with the maintenance of internal order, and can be intended only for national defense. Furthermore, Germany is allowed, under Article 196, to retain all works of coast defense not bearing the character of offensive bases or menacing to the passage into the Baltic. When Lansing opposed the destruction of these, Lloyd George supported his argument of Germany's right to defend herself.

Why did not the British exert themselves to strip Ger-

many on the naval side as the French did on the land side? It is probable that they did not want to lay her defenseless to France by sea. They no longer feared Germany on the water. The instruments of naval warfare cannot be so readily improvised as those of land warfare. England could feel sure of her superiority on her element, but she had done enough for France in giving her security by land. The fleet left to Germany was no menace to France, but, together with the coast defenses, might restrain her from dominating Germany by sea. If any one was to do that, it must be England.

But, if little actual progress was made at the Peace Conference in the matter of limiting naval armament, the door was kept open for future investigation and discussion as in the case of limitation of land armament, by the provision of Articles VIII and IX of the Covenant. While the only specific mention of naval armament in Article VIII is the final clause providing for publicity ("exchange of full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments") regarding naval as well as military programmes, yet it must be understood that the eventual limitation is intended to apply to navies as well as armies, and the permanent commission appointed at the Rome meeting of the Council in May, 1920, was directed to make inquiries regarding both naval and land armament.

Although naval disarmament was never actually discussed at Paris, the problem was really less difficult of approach than that of land disarmament. The leading naval power of the world, Great Britain, jealous as she was of her supremacy, proved ultimately to be far less opposed to a discussion of the basis of her position than was the leading military power, France. Lloyd George had offered to discuss naval reduction, though he said he

doubted if his proposals would be found acceptable by American authorities. In the end, Great Britain has actually accepted American proposals on the subject.

The causes of Great Britain's larger amenability to reason are not far to seek. There was little war hysteria to be overcome in her case, for she had not been invaded and ravaged, as had France. The crippling of the common enemy, Germany, by sea was much more complete and permanent than on land. Other large fleets remained, those of America and Japan, but neither could be seriously considered as a menace to the security of the British Empire. Great Britain was not intent upon the maintenance by force of the most rigorous application possible of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Finally, it may be said that sensible British leaders were becoming aware that, with the development of new agencies of warfare, the usefulness of the "capital ship" was no longer in proportion to its enormous cost. And Great Britain was desperately anxious to get back on a sound economic basis. Two years of reflection sufficed to prepare her for a great sacrifice of her secular prestige, a sacrifice that constitutes a real, if not a very considerable, step on the road to disarmament.

This step was not taken through the instrumentality of the League, since one of the Powers whose coöperation was essential to its success, the United States, had kept out of the League. It could not be a very radical step, since the United States was not prepared to join in any permanent and effective international organization, without which, in substitution for armed force as a guarantee of national security, no far-reaching programme of disarmament is possible. Yet within these limitations the Government of President Harding did all in its power to reduce the danger of a future clash among the great

naval Powers of the world. It took the initiative in the Washington Conference. It offered sacrifices and laid down a concrete programme. It even went so far, in endeavouring to reduce possibilities of friction in the Pacific, as to enter upon a treaty that has many of the doubtful and even dangerous features of a special alliance—with Japan, Great Britain, and France.

The result, in terms of naval disarmament, is not large. The very idea of disarmament was renounced at the start in favour of "limitation of armament." Likewise, all efforts to arrive at any absolute standard of limitation had to be abandoned in favour of the empirical standard of the *status quo*. Definitions of "national security," the term forced into the Covenant by Japan and France, were found to be simply impossible. Yet the idea could not be supplanted by that of "domestic security," since there was no adequate substitute offered for guaranteeing national security. The only possible programme was that of stopping further naval increases on a basis of maintaining existing and potential ratios of strength. It is not, did not pretend to be, disarmament, and the check is slight. Burdens have been temporarily prevented from growing, but they have not been greatly reduced. The principle of security through armament, which lies at the centre of the whole problem, has not been abandoned. Perhaps the most significant fact in the whole set of developments is Great Britain's acceptance of the ultimate ratio of equality with the United States.

## CHAPTER XXII

### CONTROL OF ARMAMENTS OF SMALL NATIONS—ATTITUDE OF FRANCE

ONE evening late in May, at a critical moment of the Peace Conference (I find it recorded in my notes of that time), I found the President standing alone before a large-scale map of southeastern Europe. It hung on the wall of his study, where the "Big Four" held their daily meetings. It was a warm evening and the window stood partly open. In the bit of driveway outside paced an American sentinel.

For some moments after I came in the President continued to study the map with deep absorption. It was plain to see that he had had a hard day of it, for he showed it in the drawn lines of his face.

It was, indeed, a trying time for everybody. While the German treaty had been finished and delivered, it was doubtful if the Germans would ever sign it. They were attacking it bitterly. No one in the world seemed satisfied with anything that had been done, and now that the Council had turned its attention to the Austrian treaty, a swarm of new problems relating to the crumbling empires of the east and southeast—Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Russia—assailed them. Revolution was still smouldering in Hungary, and brush fires of national conflict or civil war were burning over half of Europe. It seemed at the time a veritable race of peace with anarchy. The President's case was still further complicated by home problems. He had just finished—nobody knows how he managed it—a

long message to Congress, working it out in spare moments on his typewriter before or after the meetings of the Four; an Irish-American committee recently come to Paris was making it hot for him and everybody else; and, finally, the attacks upon him and upon the League Covenant had broken out with new bitterness in Congress.

I thought of the enormous difficulties that this man faced, trying to work out just settlements in this ancient hotbed of strife—with the Austrians fretting at that moment at Saint Germain for an unfinished treaty—trying to work out just settlements when there was no good-will anywhere to be found! And it was a spirit of good-will, mutual helpfulness, that the President had sought to inspire, and upon which his settlements, if they were to be effective, must rest. It was no wonder, I thought, that these bitter weeks were wearing him out; that sometimes of an evening, after the Conference had ended and he had relaxed, his face looked like death; and sometimes one side of it, and his eye, would twitch painfully. Yet he never gave over trying, in that stew of problems, to keep his principles in the foreground and, if he could not realize them in their entirety, to prevent or mitigate, as far as possible, proposals which contravened them. His associates, and especially Clemenceau, no matter how hard they fought him, recognized the utter sincerity of his purpose. Occasionally this feeling slipped out, as in the words of Clemenceau:

President Wilson had come to Europe with a programme of peace for all men. His ideal was a very high one, but it involved great difficulties, owing to these century old hatreds between some races.<sup>1</sup>

“We have been studying the new boundaries of Austria,” the President said to me finally. “The Austrians

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 26.

are at swordspoints with the Jugoslavs here in the Klagenfurt Basin. We have been trying to arrange for an early plebiscite."

"They prefer to fight," I said.

"Yes," he said, "they all prefer to fight. Clemenceau told us the other day that here in Istria both sides were putting up barbed wire and preparing for war. Up here the Rumanians and Hungarians are fighting; and the Czechs and the Poles."

I told him that we had counted up fourteen small wars going on in various parts of Europe.

"I do not doubt it," he said. "We have been considering the limitations of armament of these restless small States; but how can the great Powers impose disarmament upon them when they will not impose it upon themselves?"

A few days later he put the same question, even more bluntly, to his associates:

The principal Powers might find it embarrassing [he said] if they were asked whether they intended to impose a limitation of armaments on themselves. The reply would be, "Yes, the Council of the League of Nations is to present a plan." To this the representatives of the small States would reply, "Are you bound to accept it?" and the principal Powers would have to reply, "No."

To this neither Lloyd George nor Orlando made any reply, but Clemenceau, as the record sets forth, "pointed out the much greater responsibilities of the principal Powers."

No problems, indeed, proved more difficult throughout the Conference than those of the new small States. During the war the President had been a strong champion of the rights of the small States. He had encouraged the Poles and the Serbs, and formally recognized the Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, June 4.

slovaks. This was not merely a policy of the greatest value in breaking down the morale of the enemy powers, by destroying their unity, but it represented his own deep conviction regarding the rights of peoples to determine their own government, and the duty of the strong to assist them. He was more concerned always with the duties of the strong than with the rights of the weak. He was greatly attracted by an address by Marshal Joffre at the French Academy and copied off a sentence of it which he used afterward during his speech at the Guildhall in London and elsewhere. This sentence was as follows:

Let her [France] never forget that the weak and the small cannot live free in the world if the strong and the great are not ever ready to place their strength and power at the disposal of right.

This was exactly the President's doctrine and he delighted in it; he believed that the acid test of democracy lay in the treatment by the strong of the weak.

But no sooner had the Peace Conference opened than new policies began to develop, as far as the poles removed from the President's, and Joffre's, idea; for they sought to use the weak to help protect and make more secure the strong. The central purpose of the policy of France—here, as always, dictated by French fears—was to build up a ring of small States around Germany and make these dependent upon her, rather than upon Germany, for protection. Poland, with the Polish Army commanded by French generals, thus became a military satellite of France; and this was almost equally true of Rumania and of others of the small States. The French supported throughout the Peace Conference—the record is full of it—the demands of these smaller States for the utmost aggrandizement at the expense of the enemy States. This policy tended, of course, irrespective of its justice or in-

justice in particular cases, to make each small State apprehensive regarding its new gains, and fearful of the possible revenge of the old enemy powers (they retained a profound respect for the prowess of the Germans) and obliged them to turn to France, then and since, the strongest Continental State, for protection. The more unjust the settlement might be, the greater the fear of the small State and the sharper the sense of needed protection. And the more help they got the fiercer grew the nationalistic spirit among them; and the more excited the scramble for wider boundaries, for coal and iron mines, for railroads and industrial centres.

We have a vivid picture of the situation in central Europe in the secret report to the President of the American officer, Major Gen. F. J. Kernan, who was the chief American representative on the Interallied Commission to Poland. He says (April 11):

In central Europe, the French uniform is everywhere in evidence, officers and men. There is a concerted, distinct effort being made by these agents to foster the military spirit in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and, I believe, in Rumania. The imperialistic idea has seized upon the French mind like a kind of madness, and the obvious effort is to create a chain of States, highly militarized, organized as far as possible under French guidance, and intended to be future allies of France. I have no doubt whatever of this general plan, and it is apparently meeting with great success. Poland is endeavouring to raise an army of approximately 600,000; the Czechs are striving to raise an army of about 250,000, and Rumania is struggling under a very extensive military burden. All of this means that these people have no belief in the efficacy of the League of Nations to protect them, and that under the guidance of the French, a strong military combination is being built up, capable perhaps of dominating Europe. This purpose, of course, is not avowed. The claim is that this chain of strong military States is essential to hold back the tide of Russian Bolshevism. I regard this largely as camouflage. Each of the three States named

has aggressive designs upon the surrounding territory, and each is determined to get by force, if need be, as large an area as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The "aggressive military action" predicted by General Kieran in April actually took place later. It is surely one of the tragic incidents of the Peace Conference that the legitimate rights and interests of the Poles, in which the President had long been profoundly interested, should have been so confused, even submerged, by the selfish, conflicting interests and purposes of the great Powers. But Poland has ever been a tragic figure in history, much used, never served, by her greater neighbours. Again and again in the conference, the French were perfectly frank in speaking of this use of Poland, not to help the Poles, but to serve the interests of the allied Powers.

On June 2, for example, Clemenceau said:

When we spoke of establishing Poland, it must be remembered that this was not done merely to redress one of the greatest wrongs in history. It was desired to create a barrier between Germany and Russia.<sup>2</sup>

The Poles were to be used to hold back Bolshevism, to weaken Germany, to balance the power of the Czechs—everything in the world except to build up a sound Polish State.

As for the British, their attitude toward the small States—the note oftenest sounded in the Peace Conference—was one of sharp impatience with the small Powers because they were trouble-makers and costly, and so long as they would not settle down, there could be no return to peace, and no revival of normal trade and commerce in which the British (and to a lesser degree the Americans)

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<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 24, for full text.

<sup>2</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four.

were vitally interested. We find Lloyd George lashing out in denunciation of the "monstrous demands of Czechoslovakia" (March 11), or the "miserable ambitions" of the small States (May 23). For these States spent the money and supplies they got, not in reconstruction, but in building up their armaments and in drilling soldiers—and this money had to come out of the pockets of the great Powers. Once in the Conference Mr. Lansing asked the British if they recognized the King of Montenegro.

"We do," replied Mr. Balfour dryly. "We pay for him."

There also existed the feeling that some of these small Powers might get entirely out of hand and further upset the equilibrium of Europe.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE urged that the Great Powers should not allow the small States to use them as catspaws for their miserable ambitions. Prussia had begun just as these States were beginning, and at that time had not a population as large as Jugoslavia.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the Italians, there was never any general policy toward the problem of the small States, except to keep all of them, but especially Jugoslavia, small and weak, for Italy, unlike France, could not expect any small State, except possibly Albania, to look to her for protection. Italy even preferred to strengthen her old but now helpless enemy, Austria, as against the powerful new State of Jugoslavia, which was right at her eastern door.

Such was the situation when the problem of the limitation of armament of small States arose acutely on May 15. On the day before, the Austrian delegates had arrived at Saint Germain, and it had become necessary to settle at once the military terms of the Austrian treaty.

It appeared that a fundamental difference of opinion existed. In the proposed draft of military clauses, Article II contained an "American-British" proposal that compulsory military service be abolished, and a "French-Italian" proposal providing for a "one-year compulsory short-term service."

Here the Americans and British, both of whom relied on sea power rather than on land power, were expressing their traditional hostility to compulsory armies; while the French and Italians were naturally enough defending the basic institution upon which rested continental military power.

After these proposals had been submitted by President Wilson, Mr. Lloyd George arose at once:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said that the very first chapter . . . raised a very big question of principle which would have to be considered, not only in regard to Austria, but also in reference to all the new little States which might be formed. Should it be decided that each of these little States, including Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugoslavia, were each to be allowed to maintain comparatively large armies, nothing would keep them from going to war with one another. . . . In his opinion, it was essential that the Council should lay down definite principles in regard to armaments, which would be applied to Austria, Hungary, and all adjoining States.<sup>1</sup>

But what was that "general principle" to be? Wilson had proposed a general principle of disarmament in his Fourteen Points—reduction to "the lowest point consistent with domestic safety"—but when he endeavoured to get it adopted as a future standard, as I have shown in former chapters, he was bitterly opposed. Yet the Allies had applied that principle, which they declined to accept for themselves, to the enemy! Germany was to have only a "police force" of 100,000 men. And now

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 15.

had come the problem of little weak Austria, surrounded by potential enemies. The military men had suggested that she be allowed 40,000 soldiers, while Clemenceau was suggesting 15,000. But Austria, with 6,000,000 population and 40,000 soldiers, was all out of proportion to Germany with 60,000,000 population and 100,000 soldiers, and if Austria was kept down even to 40,000 and the Jugoslavs, Rumanians, Czechoslovaks, to say nothing of the Greeks and Bulgarians, were to have compulsory service and great armies, what chance was there for Austria to survive, or, indeed, for preventing war among all the other snarling, restless, fearful nationalities? And how to apply the same rules to States which, like Austria and Bulgaria, had been enemies of the Allies, and States like Serbia and Rumania, that had been friends and supporters?

Plainly a general principle was needed; but what should it be? The abolition of compulsory service, as the Americans and British suggested? The French and Italians were alarmed at this. Orlando told his associates frankly (May 15) that Italy could not raise an army on the volunteer basis. France intended to keep the compulsory service system for herself (she had then, and has had since, the most powerful and efficient army in the world)—why then let it be abolished, say, in Poland and Rumania, which were military allies of France? France did not want small armies in any of these central States except Austria. And this latter end—a weak Austrian Army—Clemenceau easily secured by promptly saying (May 15) that he accepted the American-British plan for abolishing compulsory service in Austria. He could hardly do otherwise, indeed, after accepting the principle for Germany. But this did not satisfy Italy, because it did not meet the problem of armament in Jugoslavia; so

Orlando proposed the examination of the whole question on a broader basis; he wanted a study of "the armament plans to be enforced in all parts of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire."

President Wilson, seeing here a chance to advance his whole programme of limitation of armaments, agreed with Orlando.

"All these questions," he said, "hung together to form a single scheme," and then he promptly suggested his original standard of the Fourteen Points, that "the military régime applied to Germany should be taken as the standard."

The council, accepting the President's proposal, referred the whole programme to the military representatives of the Supreme War Council, asking them to submit a report "showing what forces should be allowed to Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia (including Montenegro), Rumania, Poland, Bulgaria, and Greece, taking the German figures as a proportional standard."

Apparently they meant business! But two days later, and while this subject was still under consideration by the military men, a most embarrassing incident occurred. Lord Robert Cecil had discovered that, at this very moment, when the Allies were endeavouring to stamp out war in central Europe and secure disarmament, enormous quantities of war supplies were being shipped to these States. He had an investigation made and a report written by Mr. W. T. Leyton, which on May 17 he sent in to the Council of Four. It was a most awkward document. It reported that "quantities of munitions are being allocated to various nations by France on the instructions of Marshal Foch," and that "in addition to this the various new States are making application to the Allies . . . to purchase their surplus stocks, and there is nothing except the financial difficulty to prevent

the various Governments from selling these stocks while the market is brisk."

So this was what was happening!

The report suggested the adoption of some policy to govern this matter in order to prevent war and bankruptcy among the small States. But the report was smothered promptly in committee, and, although an arms-traffic convention was afterward signed, ratification is still incomplete; and no doubt trade in surplus war materials continued brisk among the small States. For there was an unlimited amount of ammunition left to be shot away.

On May 23 the generals made their report on the limitation of armaments of small States. It was an epoch-making meeting; the largest, except one, ever held by the Council of Four. The Conference had to move upstairs out of the President's small room. There were thirty-three in attendance, including a splendid array of gold-laced generals and admirals. A great speech—one of the greatest speeches of the entire Peace Conference—was made by the American general, Bliss. It was the kind of straightforward speech, touched with powerful conviction, that turned opinion then and there. Such was the impression it made that Clemenceau suggested that "a copy of General Bliss's speech be circulated"; Orlando said that "General Bliss's speech had made a considerable impression on him"; President Wilson remarked that "the considerations which General Bliss had urged were . . . very serious and large, and required to be very carefully considered"; while Mr. Lloyd George said that "he had been greatly impressed by the remark made by General Bliss in the course of his statement in regard to the possible formation of a Germano-Slav alliance."

General Bliss set forth what the military representa-

tives had done. They had calculated the armament of the small States on the basis of the armament already allowed to Germany—100,000 men. This would mean for Austria only 15,000 men; for Hungary, 18,000; Bulgaria, 10,000; Czechoslovakia, 22,000; Jugoslavia, 20,000; Rumania, 28,000; Poland, 44,000, and Greece, 12,000. But, he said, the military men did not consider these figures sufficient for the protection of the small States, especially where there were large cities to police or where frontiers were threatened by Bolshevik incursions, and they therefore suggested other figures for armies: for example, 40,000 for Austria instead of 15,000; 80,000 for Poland instead of 44,000; 20,000 for Bulgaria instead of 10,000. While these were trivial armies compared with what the small States desired and at the time actually possessed, they were large enough for defensive and not at all for offensive purposes.

General Bliss said frankly that he thought the army of 100,000 men allowed to Germany was too small even for "domestic safety"—and that, if armies of all central Europe were reduced to the same scale, the little States "would be converted into mere vassals of the two Continental powers of the Entente [France and Italy]." . . . He did not think that "such a situation pointed to the maintenance of the peace of Europe in the future." And then he made a remark that struck home.

"The brilliancy of the military glory," he said, "which now lighted up certain of these western nations of Europe, might in reality not be an evidence of health, but only the hectic flush of disease which would eventually result in the downfall of our strip of Latin and Anglo-Saxon civilization along the western coast of Europe."

He meant, and said, that there was a danger of "future combinations between Germanic, Slavonic, and Asiatic

races, which might eventually sweep the civilization of western Europe out of the way."

But Clemenceau was utterly unwilling to have the question of the German Army reopened; nor did he wish even such drastic reductions as those proposed by the military men, except for Austria, in the armies of central Europe. After interminable further discussion it was hurriedly decided—because the Austrian treaty had to be made ready—that the Austrian Army should be a volunteer force of 30,000 men; but it was impossible to decide how to limit the armaments of all the other States. Clemenceau was opposed to any further action, but Wilson and Lloyd George were anxious that something be done.

President WILSON said that he fully shared the fears of Mr. Lloyd George [that the small States would build up great armies]. At present these peoples appeared to be out for fighting and for what they could get. His suggestion was that a period should be fixed within which it might be anticipated that the ferment in Eastern Europe would subside. . . . It might be provided in the Treaty of Peace that after January 1st, 1921, the various States should agree to accept such and such limitation of forces, unless in the judgment of the Council of the League of Nations some extension was desirable.<sup>1</sup>

Again a tussle of argument, and finally the President sadly pointed out (in the words quoted above) the embarrassing fact that, in all this discussion, the Allies were asking these smaller States to do something they had declined to do themselves. Even the settling of a reasonably distant date for the limitation of armament implied something vastly more definite than anything the great Powers were committed to.

Finally, it was proposed that the representatives of the

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, June 4.

smaller States be called in to discuss the whole subject; to see if they would not agree to a general limitation of armament.

It would require a pen dipped in irony to report properly what happened in this conference which was held on June 5 at President Wilson's house. The great men of five small but ambitious States were there: Paderewski for Poland, Beneš for Czechoslovakia, Bratiano and Misu for Rumania, Venizelos for Greece, and Vesnitch for Serbia. These were able men, every one, and some of them were men who, in a larger arena, might well have qualified as among the greatest contemporary figures. They made good speeches, strong speeches. They all accepted the principle of the desirability of limitation of armaments just as the great Powers had done—and, just as the great Powers had done, argued the absolute necessity of providing for their own safety; they argued their own "special risks"; they doubted the immediate efficacy of a league of nations, and demanded more rather than less armament. Every argument that the great Powers had made the little Powers threw back at them. Lloyd George, sensing, no doubt, the weakness of their case, when they themselves set no example of disarmament, argued with Paderewski that after peace was signed "there would be great reduction in the military force of the British Empire. The Rumanian Army would almost certainly be larger than the British, and probably the same could be said of the Polish."

But Paderewski countered dryly with a dart that had sting that "Great Britain did not have to 'fight the water' on its frontier."

And if the little Powers there represented were to disarm, what about the neutrals who were not? Would not they be worse off than Holland or Switzerland? Finally,

Dr. Beneš shot another bolt that hurt. He said that the threat to the small States was not only from Russia or the neutral States, but, "for that matter, the Western Powers." What! Were the small States also afraid of their protectors?

And so the representatives of the small States filed out; and the "Big Four" agreed that the problem was too difficult by far to tackle further, and dropped it forthwith. Four days later, on June 9, there were fresh reports of bitter fighting in the Balkans.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PROBLEMS OF CONTROLLING THE NEW INSTRUMENTALITIES OF WARFARE: AIRPLANES, POISON GAS, SUBMARINES

“The whole of modern civilization is at stake, and whether it will perish and be submerged, as has happened to previous civilizations of older types, or whether it will live and progress, depends upon whether the nations engaged in this war, and even those that are onlookers, learn the lessons that the experience of war may teach them. . . . The application of scientific knowledge and the inventions of science during the war have made it more and more terrible and destructive each year. . . . If there is to be another war in twenty or thirty years’ time, what will it be like? If there is to be concentrated preparation for more war the researches of science will be devoted henceforth to discovering methods by which the human race can be destroyed. These discoveries cannot be confined to one nation, and their object of wholesale destruction will be much more completely achieved hereafter even than in this war.”—LORD GREY, 1918.

WHAT was to be done with new instrumentalities of destruction which had come into swift use during the great war? Here were strange, unpredictable, uncontrollable new inventions—only at the beginning of their possible development—that turned topsy-turvy familiar tactics. Hitherto impregnable national boundaries lost their significance with the air above humming with flying machines; poison gases obliterated distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, killing all alike; wireless telegraphy wiped out time and space, and submarines revolutionized war at sea.

From time to time, even during the Peace Conference, some new evidence of these "miracles" startled men's thoughts, and set the imagination to racing. Early in June, for example, young Read—"NC-4 Read"—arrived in France, having made the first passage of the stormy Atlantic by airplane. He and his associates called upon the President at the Paris "White House," a modest young man in the uniform of a lieutenant commander of the American Navy. The members of the Council of Four were just coming in at the moment to their morning meeting, and the President introduced them and the admirals with them to Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Orlando.

"I congratulate you," said the President, referring to the adulation they were receiving in Paris, "on keeping your heads on the ground as well as in the air."

Read and his companions had halved the distance between America and Europe, and many there were to comment upon the fact that if this could be done in peace it could be done in war—and going in either direction. What, then, became of the isolation of any nation? Such possibilities weighed heavily in many of the discussions at Paris.

The French generals argued strongly against permitting the manufacture and use by the enemy powers even of commercial airplanes, because they might, almost overnight, be fitted with explosives, possibly more dangerous than any yet known, and in a surprise attack destroy whole cities.

Lord Hardinge said "that the aërial situation might by 1923 have so greatly changed that it would be unwise for the Governments at present to say what should then be done."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Foreign Ministers, April 26.

"Germany," said Lloyd George, "might discover some new gas, with which she might suddenly overwhelm her enemies."<sup>1</sup>

Who could say what was in men's minds? And who could stop them thinking, even if their thought was turned toward destruction?

Yet something had to be done to limit these new instrumentalities—if not the establishment of any new general policy for all nations, at least the disarmament of Germany.

President Wilson had seen the larger aspects of the problem with a prophetic eye. He asked the Peace Conference to "take a picture of the world" into its mind. "Is it not," he said, "a startling circumstance . . . that the great discoveries of science, that the quiet studies of men in laboratories . . . have now been turned to the destruction of civilisation?"<sup>2</sup>

He sets forth also the method, as he sees it, for meeting this new problem:

"Only the watchful and continuous coöperation of men can see to it that science, as well as armed men, is kept within the harness of civilisation."

The discussion of this great new problem began early in February and continued intermittently until the middle of June—and was then left unsettled in most of its really important phases. Whole days were devoted to argumentation, and every possible aspect of the problem was threshed out. In some of the struggles over disarmament there had developed, as in connection with the abolition of compulsory military service, an American-British point of view as contrasted with a French-Italian point of view. But in the case of these new instrumentalities

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 28.

<sup>2</sup>Minutes, Plenary Conference, January 25.

ties of war (except submarines, where the Americans and British were substantially in agreement on the policy: "sink the pests") the Americans had a vigorous policy of their own and all the other nations were against them. A clear understanding of these differences of view is of the utmost importance, for they strike down to the fundamentals not only of the Paris Peace Conference but of all other international conferences.

Two things were at once assumed by the Conference and brushed aside, as the most vital problems often are, practically without discussion:

First, that Germany should be utterly disarmed, so far as military uses were concerned, of airplanes, poison gas, submarines, tanks, etc. Everyone agreed to that.

Second, no one at Paris considered for a moment any immediate general reduction of armament in these new instrumentalities which should apply to the Allies as well as to the enemy States. There were provisions for future inquiry by the League of Nations, but this was a long way off. The immediate effect was to increase rather than reduce allied resources in airplanes, poison gases, submarines, and the like; for all the vast German armament was to be turned over to the Allies and distributed among them.

But from this point onward a vital difference of opinion developed between the Americans and the Europeans.

Too much, by far, has been made of the difference between certain members of the American delegation; for example, Mr. Lansing and the President. And there were indeed vital differences of opinion and of method—to say nothing of differences in temperament—the soreness of which was bound to be ventilated while they still hurt; but when it came to an expression of the American attitude toward specific problems of the peace there was in

almost all cases an extraordinary singleness in point of view. It was the point of view of the outsider, seeking to look at controversial issues fairly and to reach practical solutions that could be upheld without engendering fresh controversies. It was the point of view of a nation with a large tradition of free, self-reliant development behind it. Thus Mr. Lansing in the Council of Foreign Ministers, General Bliss in the Supreme War Council, Baruch or Lamont or Davis or Hoover in the Supreme Economic Council, and Haskins or Lord or Seymour or Beer or Young in the various commissions, struck the American note, and set forth, in general, the same principles that the President was standing for in the Council of Four. And these larger principles and traditions remain the same whether Mr. Wilson or Mr. Harding sits in the White House; they are those governing ideas which represent the genius of the race and are above and beyond partisan quarrels and temporary changes in administration.

This unity of purpose on the part of the Americans, as well as the difference of view between the Americans and the other Allies, was illustrated in many ways in meeting the problem of these new instrumentalities of war. The other Allies attempted persistently to do two things in regard, for example, to aircraft:

First, not only to take away all military aircraft from Germany, but to deprive her, for a long time, at least, of all aircraft—literally break up her whole aircraft industry.

Second, to give the Allies the right to fly over and alight in Germany without time limit, while allowing Germany no reciprocal rights.

She was thus not only to be disarmed in a military sense, but crippled more or less permanently, so far as these new inventions were concerned, in an economic sense.

These proposals were disputed at every point by the Americans, in the Aéronautical Commission by General Patrick, in the Council of Foreign Ministers by Mr. Lansing, and in the Supreme Council by the President. They all consistently maintained that this was a needless and dangerous intrusion upon the sovereignty of Germany; they insisted that a distinction be drawn between military and civilian uses of these instrumentalities, and that, while Germany should be prohibited from continuing their military development, their economic use should not and could not be prevented, and that if temporary discriminations against Germany in the use of commercial airplanes were necessary, until peace should be established, a definite time limit should be set. The Americans saw in such permanent prohibitions only an indefinite extension of military control and a continuance of the military spirit. They were for getting the war over and the normal methods of peace reëstablished as soon as possible.

This difference was vividly illustrated in the argument on March 17 over the proposed article of the preliminary air terms, which provided that Germany be prohibited "until the signature of the final Treaty of Peace" from manufacturing or importing airplanes or "parts of aircraft, seaplanes, flying boats, or dirigibles, and of engines for aeroplanes."

This, of course, would stop the entire industry, military as well as commercial, for many months, but still it did not go far enough. General Duval, the French expert, said that the British, Italian, Japanese, and French representatives had asked for the addition of a clause providing in the Treaty for a much longer prohibition.

"This proposal," he remarked, "had been opposed by the American representative" (who was General Patrick).

He then presented the Council with the report of the Commission showing exactly the position taken by each of the five great nations regarding this most important problem. The question put to each was as follows:

After the Treaty of Peace and in view of the easy transformation of commercial aircraft into weapons of war, will it be necessary to prohibit civilian aviation in Germany and all other enemy States?

Here are the answers:

**GREAT BRITAIN:** Yes, for a period long enough to dissipate the very extensive air industry now existing in Germany and all States which became our enemies by reason of the war. This period should not, in its opinion, be less than from two to five years.

**FRANCE:** Yes, for 20 or 30 years, a period required for the destruction of all existing flying material and dispersions of personnel, for it is impossible to foresee the progress of flying in the immediate future.

**ITALY:** Yes, for a long period, since Germany and all enemy States deserve to be penalized and the Allies are entitled to take precautions.

**JAPAN:** Yes [agreeing with the majority].

**THE UNITED STATES:** No, considering all such restrictions of the entire flying activity of Germany and her Allies after the signature of the Treaty of Peace to be neither wise nor practicable.<sup>1</sup>

In the discussion of this proposal the President took exactly the position held by the American representative.

He could not accept any such additional condition, he told the Council, adding: "Railroad trains could be used to carry guns; should the manufacture of trains therefore be limited? Some types of ships could be readily converted for military use; should the construction of ships be limited on this account?"

Owing to his opposition this amendment was dropped and a prohibition (in Article 201) for six months was

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, March 17.

adopted to provide for possible danger until the war was out of the way.

While the President was absent in America we find Mr. Lansing taking exactly the same attitude regarding the distinction between military and commercial uses of these new inventions. He told the Council:

As long as airplanes existed which could be used for commercial purposes, they could always be converted into military machines. The problem presented the same difficulties as that connected with horses, which could be used to draw guns or to draw ploughs. Everything depended on the use made of the article in question.<sup>1</sup>

When the provision giving unlimited liberty of passage and landing over and in Germany for allied airplanes came up in the Council of Foreign Ministers (April 26) Mr. Lansing attacked it with almost brutal directness.

There was no reciprocity about them [the provisions]; Germany was given no rights, and it appeared as though the Allied Governments were trying to suppress all economic aerial activity on her part. . . . He did not see why Germany was not given the right to pass through the air of other countries when the Allies reserved for themselves full powers to use the air routes of Germany.

He therefore proposed a clause establishing a date of limitation—January 1, 1923—upon the obligations imposed in the matter of passage and landing, and this was, after much discussion, adopted and became Article 320 of the Treaty.

These contests did not mean that the Americans were a whit less positive in their view that Germany be completely disarmed in a military sense. They supported the following most sweeping provisions in the Treaty:

The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces. . . . No dirigible shall be kept. (Article 198.)

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, March 12.

What they wanted to avoid was a long-continued, irritating interference with the economic life of the enemy nations—which they believed would lead speedily to future wars.

Much the same problem arose in connection with the use of poison gases. All were agreed on an absolute prohibition of the military use of gases.

The use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all analogous liquids, materials or devices being prohibited, their manufacture and importation are strictly forbidden in Germany.

But the other Allies wished to go much further. They wished to compel the German Government to disclose German chemical processes and secrets; and even to permit the allied Governments “to inspect all plants used for the manufacture” of chemicals used in the manufacture of poison gases.

The British strongly supported this contention—and were seconded by France. It came up first on April 15 in the Council of Foreign Ministers—the “Little Five”—where it was strenuously met by Mr. Lansing. In setting forth his opposition he said “he expressed the views of President Wilson.”

As a matter of fact [he continued], the communication of details relating to chemical processes really constituted an economic question rather than a military one, and since the use of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and all analogous matters or devices had been prohibited, including their manufacture and importation, he thought that was sufficient safeguard without asking the German Government to put the Allies in an effective possession of all their chemical processes, including the production of substances from which such things could be made . . . [he] expressed the view that all the processes could be covered by the term “dyes.”

The Five not being able to settle the problem—even after much heated discussion—they referred it to the Council of Four, where it came up on April 28. Here the British proposal was vigorously supported by Mr. Lloyd George. He said that "he was advised by Lord Moulton that the Germans were three years ahead of the Allies in these matters."

The British military authorities [he continued] . . . considered that there was a real danger that Germany might discover some new gas and, without any considerable armaments, might employ this as a means for attacking the Allied and Associated Powers, thus frustrating the provisions made for disarmament.

But the President came back strongly with the American contention:

President WILSON said that the objection to this proposal was that the Germans could not reveal this information without also revealing trade secrets. He was advised by his experts that nearly every chemical used for the war was related to commercial chemistry, and it was impossible to ascertain one secret without ascertaining others. . . . What he wanted to avoid was an article which could be used in a roundabout way for irritating investigation of all possible secrets. Such matters did not come within the purview of the military terms.<sup>1</sup>

He also argued that the means would not accomplish the end desired: "he did not think that the German chemists would allow their true secrets to be discovered." There was no way of examining their minds!

After some discussion the provision requiring the Germans to disclose the mode of manufacture of poison gases used for military purposes was adopted: but the provision for allied inspection was eliminated.

As to submarines, the Americans agreed that they had

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 28.

no peace uses and were willing, like the British, to see them all abolished.

Lloyd George said that "it would be better to destroy as many of these pests as possible."<sup>1</sup>

President Wilson said that "he himself was opposed to submarines altogether and hoped the time would come when they would be contrary to International Law. In his view they should be regarded as outlaws."

But the French objected to this. They wanted the submarines to increase their own navy.

The French Admiral de Bon said that "his policy was to keep the German submarines, of which France had received some fifty. France had very few of her own."

Here is part of the exact discussion:

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said that he did not think that navies ought to be strengthened by submarines.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that if ever France had another war with Germany they might be useful, although he hoped long before that they would be obsolete.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said he would like to destroy all the German submarines.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that France had very few, whereas Great Britain had very many.<sup>2</sup>

The French contention prevailed and the clause providing that submarines "be destroyed or broken up" was stricken out.

Thus, while Germany was completely disarmed in the matter of submarines, the allied nations increased their submarine fleets. In all these new instrumentalities the Peace Conference left the allied nations more strongly armed than ever before—although with a pledge to Ger-

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, February 6.

<sup>2</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, April 25.

many in the preamble of the military clauses of the Treaty and certain agreements in the Covenant of the League of Nations to take up later the whole matter of limitation of armaments.

It became crystal clear as these discussions developed that everything depended upon point of view, attitude of mind. If men looked upon inventions and scientific appliances only from the point of view of war, then everything became dangerous; there must be an attempt to corner every contingency with a prohibition, and often a perpetual prohibition at that; with a final *reductio ad absurdum* in trying to penetrate the secrets of men's minds. "Railroad trains and ships," as Wilson said, "horses," as Lansing said, thus became potential implements of war—and a step further, scythes, knives, stones—until nothing civilized was left!

What Wilson argued, day by day, patiently and persistently, was that the only future hope of peace lay in a new attitude of mind; and an organization not for war, or to enforce prohibitions, but for peace, and to protect the use of these splendid new instrumentalities, the finest scientific fruits of the human mind, for the benefit, not the destruction, of civilization.

Prohibitions were not enough; there must be constructive and creative effort: a coöperative rather than a military spirit; moral force uppermost, rather than armed force. This he preached early and late; and because of this conviction, which was as deep as his nature, he stood for setting up, at any cost, some "permanent instrumentality"—the League of Nations—which mankind, when it came out of the obsession of war, might use for its new purposes.

In no respect has the correctness of Wilson's position been more amply demonstrated than in its relation to the

new instrumentalities of warfare. When the Washington Conference, with its lack of a substitute for armed force as a guarantee of national security, approached such problems as those of submarines and poison gas, it found itself as helpless as the old Hague Conferences had been; and its action in regard to them was about as effective. It had meant to keep off the subject entirely, but it was forced upon the attention of the delegates—poison gas by the pressure of public opinion, submarines by the obstinacy of France in refusing to accept the ratios set by the Hughes programme. France's opposition to the ratio in capital ships was doubtless inspired by *amour propre*; but the same thing cannot be said in regard to her stand on the subject of submarines and auxiliary ships. The capital ship is an expensive and obsolescent instrument; competition in its field was too costly and uncertain a business to be thought of practically. The submarine and aircraft are weapons of the future. Committed incorrigibly to the old idea of security through armament, France resisted all limitations upon the construction or employment of these new instrumentalities. When the idea of limitations on the construction of auxiliary craft and submarines had to be abandoned, the project of an agreement to limit the uses of submarines was introduced in the shape of Elihu Root's resolutions. It is hardly worth while to stop to question their effectiveness or that of the agreement regarding poison gas. Agreements for mitigating the horrors of war—even provided they are kept—or agreements for reducing the burdens of armed peace, are very far from meeting the desperate need of mankind at this crisis in its history. Other agencies of warfare, perhaps still more horrible, will be found to replace those renounced. Limited forces can still fight and can be expanded by improvised means. The threat of the next, and

possibly catastrophic, war is always with us so long as no substitute methods of deciding international disputes are made effective, so long as each nation is left to depend upon its own armed force and its special alliances for its own security..

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE USE OF AFRICAN AND ASIATIC SOLDIERS IN MODERN WAR

“The United States . . . should demand as its right, the right of civilization, that . . . millions of men of savage races shall not be trained to take part in possible wars of civilized nations. If civilization wants to destroy itself it can do it without barbarian help.”—GENERAL TASKER H. BLISS.

ONE of the most vital problems connected with the limitation of armament, as it affects civilization, has attracted, since the Peace Conference, almost no attention. This concerns the right of the great nations of the world, which have in tutelage the weaker races of Africa and Asia, to arm these natives and use them as soldiers in fighting their own wars. There were those at Paris who were profoundly concerned over the growth of this ugly practice; who saw in the use in the great war of hundreds of thousands of Chinese, Siamese, Senegalese, Arabs, and Sikhs, a profound menace to future civilization. Easy and cheap transportation from all parts of the earth had made it possible to employ these troops, under the command of white officers, as never before. What was to prevent the spread of this practice? And now that natives had been trained and disciplined in military matters what was to prevent their turning this knowledge against their white neighbours? The use by the French of coloured troops in Germany after the war closed—which the Germans resented as the “black horror on the Rhine”—caused great bitterness of feeling.

Leaders who, like General Smuts of South Africa, knew most about the danger, were most concerned. He had had actual experience with what it might mean in the struggle to overcome the Germans in East Africa.

"The native Askari soldiers, well trained and disciplined under white German officers, proved a very formidable and effective force."

It was one of the accepted ideas of the German colonial enthusiasts that great native armies could be built up in German Africa which could be used not only in African wars, but for fighting for German causes elsewhere in the world. Herr Zimmermann anticipated that in fifty years the German colonial empire would have a population of 50,000,000 blacks and 500,000 whites, and that, if properly trained, an army of 1,000,000 natives could be mobilized at any time. The control of the seas by the British fleet during the great war prevented the use of such troops by Germany except in Africa itself, but the French, who had long had a form of compulsory military service in certain parts of her colonial empire, did use such troops largely on or behind the battle lines in Europe, and so did the British. Up to July 1, 1918, the French alone had employed in the great war nearly 1,000,000 coloured troops.

In the African colonies taken from Germany there was a population of nearly 13,000,000 natives. Could anything be done to prevent these natives from being armed by the nations who were to hold them as mandatories? Could any new precedent be set for dealing with this whole dangerous problem?

Certain of the leaders at Paris, American and British, had positive views upon the subject and were determined to set up new policies and prohibitions. The history of the origin and development of their programme is of profound interest and importance, for it reveals the difficul-

ties which hedge about any interference with the present system.

President Wilson had set forth clearly two principles, both of which applied to the practice:

First, armament of all States "will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety." (Point Four of the Fourteen.) That is, troops were to be raised merely to maintain internal order.

Second, the Powers which were to have mandatory rights over these undeveloped peoples were to act as trustees for them and not to benefit from their trusts. If troops were to be raised in colonies they were to be used for the benefit and protection of the people of the colonies and not for the benefit of the power that held the mandatory. This he regarded as a fundamental American principle.

General Smuts took a decided position before the Peace Conference met. In his plan for a league of nations issued in December, 1918, he sets forth his idea of the use of native troops:

That the mandatory state . . . shall form no military forces beyond the standard laid down by the League for purposes of internal police.<sup>1</sup>

It is well known that President Wilson read and was greatly impressed by General Smuts's plan for a league of nations, and added to his original draft of the Covenant a number of supplementary articles, in which he incorporated some of General Smuts's ideas, and this among them; but he made a very important extension of the principle. Under Smuts's plan the provision applied only to territories of the "old empires" of Turkey and Austria-Hungary, but the President applied it to all

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 11, for Smuts's plan.

former colonies of Germany in Africa and the Pacific as well, and went a long step further by making a specific assertion of the standard of armament he had set forth in Point Four of the Fourteen: "for the purpose of internal police." His provision was:

The mandatory State or agency shall in no case form or maintain any military or naval force in excess of definite standards laid down by the League itself for the purposes of internal police.

After the President presented his draft of the Covenant to the American Commissioners (January 10) General Bliss, the American military representative, responded (January 14) with a letter strongly supporting and emphasizing this provision of the President.<sup>1</sup> His convictions regarding the danger to civilization of the practice of arming African natives were deep.

It soon became clear that the Americans and British were quite in agreement regarding the new policy as set forth by the President, at least as it applied to the former German colonies. The problem of arming and training natives in the older British, French, Belgian, and Portuguese colonies in Africa and Asia—including India—of course never arose, although it was remarked that if the practice could be prevented in the new mandatory colonies a great step would have been taken, with the probability that it would soon affect usages in the older colonies.

The subject was first mentioned in the Council of Ten (January 24) by Lloyd George. In the course of an argument that Germany be deprived of all her colonies he said:

In many cases the Germans had treated the native populations very badly. For instance, in Southwest Africa they had deliberately pursued a policy of extermination. In other parts of Africa they had been very harsh, and they had raised native troops and encouraged

<sup>1</sup>See Volume III, Document 13, for General Bliss's comments.

these troops to behave in a manner that would even disgrace the Bolsheviks. The French and British, doubtless, had also raised native troops but they had controlled them better.

There was further discussion between the Americans and British, and when Mr. Lloyd George on January 30 brought in his resolution providing for a mandatory system for the control of the former German colonies, it went even a step further regarding armaments of natives and included a positive prohibition of the arms traffic. Actual and definite prohibitions were inserted.

The mandatory must . . . guarantee the prohibition of . . . the arms traffic . . . and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military or naval bases, and of the military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defense of territories.

No sooner had this provision been considered (that very day) in the Council than the French, arguing as usual French security, began to make objections and to demand the right to raise troops in colonies mandated to them. In order to show exactly what took place, the entire debate from the Secret minutes is here inserted:

M. PICHON said that France could not renounce the right of raising volunteers in the countries under her administration, whatever they might be. The Germans had recognized the importance of the support France had received from her Colonies. Before powerful American troops came to aid, France had resisted with her own forces for a long time, together with the British Armies, and it was certain, but for the help she had received from her Colonial Possessions, the situation would have been very critical. It was necessary that France should be empowered to recruit not conscripts, but volunteers from all colonial territories under her control. That was absolutely necessary for her future security.

President WILSON enquired if this referred to the territories controlled as mandatory states as well as to the present colonies.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that the French were the nearest neigh-

hours of Germany, and could be at all times, as they had been in the past, suddenly attacked. He did not know whether it was possible to disarm Germany, but an attempt would be made to do so. France realised that Great Britain had responsibilities in all parts of the world, and could not keep the whole of her strength concentrated at one point. America was far away, and could not come at once to the assistance of France. If the League of Nations and the peace of the world were to be established, it must not begin by placing France in a perilous position. America was protected by the whole breadth of ocean, and Great Britain by her fleet. If France was not to be permitted to raise volunteers in the territories under her administration, the people of France would greatly resent any such arrangement and would have a grievance against the Government.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE pointed out that as regards tropical colonies, at the beginning of this war, Great Britain had native forces in Uganda and Nigeria and other places, and the French also had forces in Senegal and other territories, but these forces were intended solely for the defense of those territories. They had never raised, armed and equipped great forces for carrying on big offensive operations outside those territories.

M. CLEMENCEAU observed that nevertheless the right to raise forces did exist.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said that there was nothing in the clause under review to prevent volunteer forces being raised. The words used were: "For other than police purposes and the defense of territory." He really thought those words would cover the case of France. There was nothing in the document which would prevent her doing exactly the same thing as she had done before. What it did prevent was the kind of thing the Germans were likely to do, namely, to organize great black armies in Africa, to be used for the purpose of clearing everybody else out of that country. That was the avowed policy of Germany, and if the same policy was to be encouraged among other nations, even though war in Europe might be averted, the same sort of thing might in Africa occur as had happened in the 17th and 18th centuries in India when France and Great Britain were at war there, while being fairly good friends in Europe. Great native armies were constantly being raised to fight against each other in India. There was nothing in this document which would prevent France raising an army for the defense of her territories.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that if France had the right in the event of a great war to raise troops in African territories under her control, he would ask for nothing more.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE replied that France would have exactly the same rights she had previously enjoyed. The resolution proposed by him was only intended to prevent a mandatory from drilling all the natives and from raising great armies.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he did not want to do that. All that he wished was that the matter should be made quite clear, and he did not want anybody to come and tell him afterwards that he had broken away from the agreement. If this clause meant that France had the right to raise troops in the African territories under her control in case of a general war, he was satisfied.

Mr. LLOYD GEORGE said that so long as M. Clemenceau did not train big nigger armies for the purposes of aggression, that was all the clause was intended to guard against.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he did not want to do that. He therefore understood that Mr. Lloyd George's interpretation was adopted.

President WILSON said that Mr. Lloyd George's interpretation was consistent with the phraseology.

M. CLEMENCEAU said that he was quite satisfied.<sup>1</sup>

It was not surprising that, as a result of this colloquy, the secretariat should have been puzzled as to what was really meant. The poor secretaries often had a time of it after the session was over in trying to set down the result of the discussion, and often the same diversities which had parted the heads of States were found among the secretaries. In this case they produced the following masterpiece:

It was agreed that the acceptance of the resolutions proposed by Mr. Lloyd George would not prevent mandatories from raising volunteers in the territories under their control for the defense of their countries in the event of their being compelled to attack.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Ten, January 30.

<sup>2</sup>The final phrase is probably garbled in the mimeographed version of the Minutes. It should doubtless read "being attacked," or "being compelled to meet attack." Even so, the conclusion remains vague enough.

While Clemenceau had said he was "quite satisfied" it was not truly the case. The wording of the clause was still there; and it did not at all satisfy the French. They wanted definite assurances of their right to raise and train Negro troops to use in Europe or elsewhere if necessary.

Consequently, when the subject came up for discussion in the League of Nations Commission (of which President Wilson was Chairman) over the provision in the Covenant prohibiting the raising of Negro armies by mandatory States the French again endeavoured to satisfy their demands. On February 8 General Smuts had introduced an article for the Covenant regarding the mandatory system with a clause in it exactly like that to which the French had objected in the Council of Ten on January 30. Léon Bourgeois, the French representative on the Commission, also introduced a substitute amendment, in which all reference, significantly, to raising troops among the savage or half-civilized population of the former German colonies was omitted. However, it was the Smuts wording that was accepted and incorporated in the draft of the Covenant which was to go into the Treaty. All the delegates considered the matter settled—except the French. They still worried about it.

Three days before the Treaty was presented to the Germans, on May 4, while everything was in great confusion and every effort was being made to get the Treaty printed, Clemenceau, without consulting either his colleagues of the Council of Four or the members of the League of Nations Commission which had the Covenant in charge, sent instructions to the Drafting Committee, through the French member of it—M. Fromageot—to change the wording of the Covenant so as to permit, specifically, mandatories of colonies to raise troops, not only for main-

taining internal order, but to fight, if necessary, for the mother country.

Although nothing emerged into the daylight of publicity regarding this action of the French, it caused considerable commotion among those who were concerned. It was brought at once to the attention of Colonel House and Lord Robert Cecil, American and British members of the League of Nations Commission, and they made efforts to have the former accepted wording restored. But the French argued that their interpretation was the true one and they proposed to have it down in black and white. Colonel House argued with them (as he told me afterward) that it would mean that if France and Britain should go to war each of them might arm Arab or Negro troops for fighting the other. Thus Arabs might be slaughtering Arabs and Negroes, Negroes, for no cause of their own, but for the ambitions or greeds or fears of distant States of which they knew nothing. But argument proved useless, and the whole matter had to be brought up to President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George, and on May 5 it came out into the open discussion of the Three (for Orlando was then absent in Italy). A report from the Drafting Committee was read by the Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey:

The alteration in Article 22 [of the Covenant—dealing with colonies and mandatories] was made under instructions given personally to M. Fromageot by M. Clemenceau, the President of the Conference.

The following conversation then took place:

M. CLEMENCEAU said that it was very important to France that some words should be put in to enable her to utilize native troops for the defence of French territory just as she had done in this war. He was not responsible for the actual wording employed.

President WILSON drew attention to the previous discussion

which had taken place on this subject at the Council of Ten on January 30th, when it had been agreed that precisely similar wording in the resolutions on the subject of mandates, namely, "for other than police purposes and the defense of territory," would cover France's needs.<sup>1</sup>

It was decided not to use the French wording but to restore the clause as it originally appeared in the Covenant. And so it was finally written down in the Treaty.

But the French were still determined, and have carried their contention into the commissions set up for the working out of the provisions of the mandatories and into the League of Nations. In all mandatory arrangements for colonies taken over by the British and the Belgians the prohibitions according to Article XXII are adopted almost in the wording of the Covenant, but when the draft for the French mandates for Togoland and the Cameroons was presented to the Council of the League of Nations on December 20, 1920, the following provision was included in Article III:

It is understood, however, that the troops thus raised [in French Togoland and the Cameroons] may, in the event of a general war, be utilized to repulse an attack, or for defense of territory outside that over which the mandate is administered.

This controverted the provision already agreed to in the Covenant, but it represented the French contention from the very beginning, and is an example of the tenacity with which the French pursued at Paris, and since, the realities of their programme. When the provision quoted came under the critical eye of the Secretariat of the League of Nations at Geneva, they appended in the official record this comment:

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<sup>1</sup>Secret Minutes, Council of Four, May 5.



... the Secretariat quotes the clauses in Article XXII of the Covenant which seem to be inconsistent with the foregoing permission.

These proposed drafts of mandatories have not yet been accepted by the League of Nations; and the matter stands, therefore, in abeyance. In the meantime, the process of militarizing Africa goes on—if not openly in the former German colonies, certainly in the other colonies.

One recalls the Roman Empire, in its declining days, conscious of being the exponent of some of the highest aspects of civilization, calling in the resources of jungle savagery to defend her against her stronger, cruder, more virile neighbours. The Romans themselves, depleted and debilitated, posted their barbarian legions on the European frontiers—Ethiopians, Arabs, Persians, and what-not—so that the cults of Isis from Africa and of Mithra from Asia pushed their altars beyond the Rhine and the English Channel. But such forces, called in from without, not bred steadily from within, failed to save the Roman Empire, and rather hastened its decline.

END OF VOLUME I.